VISIT…

Dungeons & Dragons® Supplement

Races of Destiny

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Introduction

Races of Destiny is a rules accessory for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. It contains information for both players and DMs. Players will find new feats, spells, and prestige classes for their characters—and a new race that may be inspiration for the next character they create. DMs will find a wealth of building blocks for adventures that take characters to human cities or the remote fortresses of the illumians—and along the way they'll meet half-elf diplomats, half-orc mercenaries, and other characters both fascinating and dangerous.

WHAT IS A RACE OF DESTINY?

In most D&D worlds, human societies dominate much of the map, and human culture is standard by which other cultures are described. Despite other races' unusual powers and long histories, it is humanity and its related races that seem poised to control the future. This book focuses on these races of destiny—humans and the races that have at least some human blood within their veins: the half-elves and half-orcs. It also explores races that were once fully human, such as the illumians, and creatures that ordinarily live among humans, such as doppelgangers.

Themes of destiny, community, and interbreeding unite the races of this book. Compared to the elves, dwarves, and other longer-lived races, those of human blood have a relatively short time in the world and strive ardently to forge their legacies and reshape the world to suit their needs. Humans explore, conquer, and settle, constantly pushing the boundaries of civilization. Their villages become towns, their towns become cities, and their cities become the cosmopolitan ports-of-call for the "movers and shakers" of the world.

Sometimes, the human drive to expand and evolve yields remarkable results. The mingling of human and elf blood gave rise to the first half-elves. The union of humans and orcs brought the first half-orcs into the world. An ambitious experiment involving a sorcerous ritual led to the birth of the illumian race and an entire society built around the power of the magic word.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

Most players and DMs can play human characters without too much strain, so rather than defining humans in general terms, this book explores the trends that have shaped human cultures throughout history, covering such themes as city-building, religion, art, and war. *Races of Destiny* also provides new insights into how humans regard other races, as well as feats and prestige classes that suit the humans' versatility and fit the book's themes of destiny and community.

Within the D&D milieu, humans interbreed more than any other race. The human tendency to absorb (some would say conquer) other races in this manner is touched on briefly as a segue into a discussion of halfbreed races, particularly half-elves and half-orcs. Half-elves and half-orcs would seem to have little in common besides a shared human heritage. However, *Races of Destiny* explores the social and psychological ramifications of living a life torn between two very different worlds, covering everything from the half-orc's outcast attitude to the half-elf's desire for acceptance. The book also provides new feats, prestige classes, racial substitution levels, and other goodies that play off these races' dual heritage.

To illustrate how humans can evolve within a magical world, we introduce the illumians—secret masters who have used magic language to transcend humanity. Their ambition and thirst for knowledge rivals that of any human; however, they have sacrificed some of their human versatility for access to arcane secrets that manifest as glowing sigils about their heads. Whereas humans gather in cities, illumians find strength and refuge in the enclaves of their secret cabals. Herein you'll find the information you need to create an illumian character, along with enough detail to ground your new character in illumian culture. *Races of Destiny* also provides some additional "toys" for illumian characters and NPCs to play with, including racial feats and prestige classes. Likewise, DMs should have no trouble inserting the secretive illumians into an ongoing campaign, using them as patrons, allies, or antagonists in the adventures they create.

Races of Destiny also discusses the panoply of strange races that either live peacefully among humans or have successfully infiltrated human society, including the twisted mongrelfolk, the noble aasimar, the less than noble tieflings, and the subtle doppelgangers. Whether you're looking for an oddball race to play or your players' next archenemy, you'll find something useful here.

In summary, this book explores races whose destiny, for good or ill, is tied to the fate of the human empires of your world. If you enjoy playing human characters because of their versatility and adaptability, you will find new ways to explore these human qualities in *Races of Destiny*. If you're looking for a humanlike race that trades some of its humanity for supernatural abilities, the mysterious illumians might capture your interest. Finally, *Races of Destiny* explores some of the nuances of the traditionally angst-ridden halfbreed races, revealing where they fit within human society and giving them new options that make them even more fun to play.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Races of Destiny makes use of the information in the three D&D core rulebooks—*Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*. In addition, it includes a small amount of material designed for use with the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

HUMANS

Illus. by C. Lukacs

In a world filled with unusual creatures and bizarre races, humans stand on their own as a ubiquitous part of any fantasy campaign. Because D&D players are themselves human, the fictional humans of the game world describe a baseline that's easy to relate to. Humans don't have the special abilities or powers of other races, so they provide a contrast for the more exotic denizens of the D&D world.

But humans aren't boring. No other race has the same combination of ambition, aggressiveness, and energy. Those attributes have enabled humanity to spread far and wide, and in most campaign worlds, human nations cover most of the map.

Humans are interesting because they're so active. While dwarves are mining the depths of the earth and elves are contemplating ancient mysteries, humans are building empires, settling new lands, and fighting titanic wars with one another.

The average human isn't as hardy as the average dwarf or as nimble as the average halfling. The average elf has a greater knack for arcane magic, and the average orc is certainly stronger. But human adaptability and energy makes the concept of an "average" human pretty nebulous. Individually, humans are vastly different from one another. Two humans chosen at random have less in common with each other than two elves—and if the two humans come from different cultures, they might have less in common with each other than an elf and a dwarf do.

Human societies are just as varied as the humans that comprise them. Some human nations are sophisticated and organized, while others are brutal and barbaric. Just by walking down the road in a human land, you can find yourself among humans who talk, work, play, and worship completely differently from the humans in the community where you started.

This cultural variety is why most campaigns have multiple human nations, each with its own culture. That's the way of humans—to divide themselves up into different societies with different behaviors, customs, and aspirations. Elves, on the other hand, tend to have a single culture in most campaigns, even if their communities are spread across the campaign map and they're not politically affiliated with each other. Put simply, elves usually act like elves. But it doesn't mean much to say that humans act like humans.

Roleplaying Application: If you're playing a human character, realize that you've got to think more about your home culture, because humans don't have the same stereotypical behavior that other races have. If a player says, "I'm a dwarf," you know

that he'll probably act gruff and taciturn, waxing eloquent about fine stonework and his well-forged axe. That player has some obvious hooks to hang his character's personality on.

But if you say, "I'm a human," you haven't said very much yet. You won't have clear character hooks until you decide what human culture you hail from and what your place was in that society. You might be an honor-obsessed swordsman who reveres his ancestors, or a streetwise gangster with a quip for every situation. Both characters are equally human. Once you get a little more specific about your human character's background, interesting character hooks will start to emerge from the decisions you make.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Dawn broke upon the eastern shore, spilling light through Senna's hovel. She rose quickly and tended to the smoldering fire, humming to herself as she cooked breakfast for the rest of the family.

Senna's father and eldest brother were already awake, slopping the few hogs that were the bulk of their family's wealth and livelihood. Winter was fast approaching, so Senna's family was feeding the hogs extra in anticipation of their sale and slaughter. By now, Senna knew the formula: Half the hogs would go to Duke Rivus in exchange for land and protection. The family would keep two hogs to provide meat through the winter, and the rest would be sold to Kovar the butcher.

Although she was used to discomfort, Senna's hands ached as she pounded out the millet used to make breakfast. *With luck,* she mused, *we'll get enough money to fix the wagon and take a trip to Alarak, city of music and life. . . .*

A thousand miles south, the sun woke Venarak as its rays speared through the dense jungle canopy. Venarak stretched his lithe, mud-covered body toward the sun and began to intone his morning prayer. "Sacred sun, I give my thanks to you for bringing your strength into our land. Protect my wife Kaneka and my daughter Vporo from the dangers that lurk in our home. Steady my hand as I hunt and fill our larders with much meat."

Venarak brought both his hands to his head in a final salutation. He picked up his bow and quiver, and giving both his wife and daughter a peck on their cheeks, headed out into the dense foliage to find game for his family and tribe. . . .

Dozens of leagues away, Nima cursed as the blare of trumpets woke her from her fitful slumber. She rose quickly, groaning at how sore her body was from sleeping in her armor, covered in the mud and filth of the army's camp. She reached into her pack and pulled out a hunk of rock-hard jerky, the only food she'd had for weeks since the siege began.

In the faint glow of the morning sun, she could already make out the columns of soldiers forming ranks for the next assault. She heard the cries of the wounded echoing across the battlefield and quickly tuned them out, trying not to let them get to her. Nima grabbed her polearm and, with a resolute sigh, marched to join her comrades for the next attack. . . .

Far from the battlefield, Senjan awoke and dressed quickly when he heard the sounds of camels grunting outside his master's compound. The caravan had arrived early, and there was much to do.

Once his master unlocked his arm-shackle, Senjan joined the other slaves in removing boxes and packages from the sides of the beasts. Fruits from the south, spices from the north, and exotic wooden carvings from the island settlements in the western sea—all went into bunkers half-buried in the desert sand. His meal would have to wait until everything was unloaded and the caravan crew tended. Such was the life of a slave. . . .

HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY

Members of other races shake their heads in amazement when confronted with the wide spectrum of personalities that comprise humanity. Even within the same society, humans push the limits on variety. However, regardless of cultural influence or invidual personality, some psychological traits define the human mind.

ENERGY AND AMBITION

If humans have a central psychological trait, it's the remarkable energy and drive they apply to their endeavors. Whether in trade, exploration, warfare, or the arts, humans have an insatiable appetite for pushing the boundaries. Humans are tenacious when they set their minds to something, although not as stubborn as dwarves or as farsighted in their quests as elves. No goal is too far out of reach for a motivated human, and no ambition is too grand. This ambitious energy impels humans to settle on the edge of the wilderness, to build great cities and monuments, and to crusade against those who threaten them.

AGGRESSION

Human ambition is usually tied to another human trait: aggression. Humans have a primal desire to take what they do not possess and to expand their reach as far as possible.

While this aggression often translates to violence—from a barroom brawl to a global war—it can take other forms. Political maneuvering, commercial trade, and acquisition of knowledge are all tools of human aggression. In her own way, a scheming merchant guildmaster is just as aggressive as a cavalry captain. She doesn't just want to enrich her guild, she wants to impoverish her rivals in the process.

As a result of this aggression, other races are often wary when dealing with humans. Nonhuman diplomats everywhere know the aggressive human mentality and are mindful that humans may push too hard or immediately make war to get what they want.

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Of all the races in the world, humans are the most forward-thinking. They spend less time looking back and remembering the past, and more time imagining the future.

For example, a dwarf might undertake an adventure to prove himself worthy to his ancestors (past focus). A halfling might adventure so she can revel in the excitement of the moment (present focus). But a human will adventure to earn a knighthood and thus a better life for himself and his children (future focus).

While most other races focus on preserving their way of life in the face of the world's dangers, humans actively try to improve their way of life, both in the short term and for generations to come. Satisfaction is fleeting for a human; there's always another mountain to climb, another castle to build, or another land to conquer.

ADAPTABILITY AND VARIETY

Humans respond well to new beliefs and schools of thought, including magic and technology, although repressive human societies may hinder the spread of such advances (probably to keep them in the hands of the elite). Humans respond to catastrophe with remarkable flexibility and can bounce back from severe problems with a speed that amazes some of the other races.

Because they're confident of their ability to adapt, humans naturally seek out challenges that other races find daunting. A middle-aged human scribe might purchase farmland on the frontier and learn to farm, leaving his old livelihood and community behind. Then, when bandits threaten his homestead, the new farmer will take up arms himself and train his children to do the same.

One manifestation of this adaptability is humans' acceptance of people who act and behave differently from them. Because there's so much variety from human to human, it's easy for humans to be accepting of nonhuman variety as well. Humans have to deal with each other all the time, so it's not too much of a stretch for a human to deal with a dwarf, an elf, or some more exotic creature.

Another aspect of human adaptability is that a given human behaves differently from day to day, so humans are comfortable with changing their own behaviors and personality traits. The happy-go-lucky minstrel you meet in the spring might be morose in the summer after a friend dies, then full of wrath and vengeance in the autumn when he finds his friend's murderer.

The variety of human existence naturally pulls human personalities in different directions. For example, humans crave having their own voice and standing out from the crowd, but they also have a tendency to "follow the herd" and adhere to the status quo. An individual human who strives to break from the mold can later become a defender of the status quo—or can defend some aspects of the status quo while advocating radical change in other aspects. Because of this inner conflict, humans as a race are decidedly neutral in alignment.

HUMAN BEHAVIOR

No one can easily explain why humans in the D&D game behave the way they do (just as there aren't easy explanations for real-world human behavior). But the game world does have some particular influences that help explain how humans wound up so ambitious, adaptable, and aggressive.

Because of their relatively short lives, humans try to fit as much as possible into the time they have, which helps explain their zeal and vibrancy. Elves and dwarves have centuries to contemplate their place in the world, but a human probably has a career in mind by age 15 and is raising the next generation by age 25.

The short human life span also means that fewer generations of humanity are alive at one time. A 50-year-old elf probably has living great-great-great-grandparents, but a 50-year-old human might not have living parents anymore. There's more variety in human personality because there isn't the weight of generations to influence behavior and personality.

Humans also live in more turbulent societies than other races. Human empires are always emerging and collapsing; even a well-established human nation might be younger than an individual dwarf or elf. The rise and fall of nations means that every human generation is touched by a revolution, war, or other calamity. Humans thus take less for granted; they assume that the world will change under their feet, and they employ their ambition, adaptability, and aggression to control (or at least survive) the changes.

Because humans are competitive by nature and require a great deal of territory, they are constantly brushing up against nonhuman lands. This expansion often leads to conflict, and many humans have a siege mentality when it comes to lands beyond their borders. Again, adaptability and aggression are the two mechanisms humans have developed to get along in such a dangerous world.

Climate and geography also shape human psychology. A group of humans who live on the frozen tundra, hunting large game as their primary source of food, views the world in a much different light from an agrarian society living in warm, hilly terrain. The tundra hunters rely on each other for survival and probably define themselves in terms of their tribe: "I am Shauseh of the Redfang tribe." But the farmers are rooted in a specific place and might define themselves in terms of their occupation ("I am

Ruthvek the barley farmer") or geographic location ("I am Ruthvek of the Three Hills province").

HUMAN LIFE

It's impossible to quantify the variety of human lifestyles in a few paragraphs. While the other standard races have a unifying culture (even if some communities deviate from that culture), humans vary wildly in the ways that they live and express themselves. However, the common threads of human behavior lead to some general trends in how they live their lives.

When you invent human societies for your D&D game, consider the following points. By emphasizing specific parts of a human lifestyle, borrowing ideas from real-world humans, and employing your own inventions, you can create human characters for your game who have rich, fascinating lifestyles.

LEISURE

Humans are hardworking people who throw themselves fully into whatever they are involved in. However, they also crave leisure time and often complain that they simply don't have the time to relax as much as they want. Humans work hard, but they play just as hard.

Like everything else in their lives, what humans consider leisure can vary from region to region and person to person. One human society might esteem calligraphy and poetry as leisure activities, while the humans in the nation across the river spend their free time dancing and drumming. Even within the same society, members of different social classes do different things with their time away from work and family chores. A human noble might hunt stags, while a human blacksmith spends his spare time arm-wrestling in the local pub.

Performance Entertainment

Humans love talking: Storytelling, jokes, witty banter, formalized debate, and good old-fashioned gossip all combine entertainment with communication. Every social class appreciates dramatic performances, even if individuals differ on specific matters of taste. Commoners tend to favor bawdier, more sensational fare, while the upper class prefers more rarefied and philosophical diversions.

Bards, orators, actors, and poets are integral parts of any human community, but the entertainer doesn't always receive the same respect that the entertainment itself does. In some places a modicum of poetic skill is part and parcel of being a noble, while in other lands such entertainers are lower-class citizens. Thus, a mediocre noble poet in one land might receive more acclaim than his verse deserves, while a visionary poet dies penniless someplace else.

Tastes and themes in entertainment change rapidly in human society, and audiences are constantly hungry for anything new and exotic. Performers from other lands and of other races are particularly fascinating, so humans will naturally flock to a gnome bard's recital or a dwarf skald who sings songs from his mountain home.

The availability of magic opens up new possibilities for entertaining performances. Wizards put on spectacular shows with illusion magic, complete with sounds and smells. Gladiators who fight with spells rather than swords can display their talents for the masses.

When an audience regards magic as just another field of endeavor, it won't be impressed by a simple *prestidigitation* spell. In a magic-rich society, only magic that features an element of artistry, grandeur, or mystery is entertaining to most humans. If magic is uncommon or prohibitively expensive, then only the privileged can see a spellcasting artist's work, and magical effects are more impressive to those who witness them.

Competitive Sport

Humans enjoy athletics of all kinds, so individual and team sports are an important leisure activity. Humans relish competition and enjoy contests that allow them to test their skills and talents against others. Feats of speed, endurance, and coordination are common, such as running, swimming, wrestling, and horseback riding. In some communities, humans intermingle their physical games with martial training, creating fit participants who can serve as soldiers during wartime.

In evil societies, entertainment may turn toward violence and decadence, including intentionally gruesome gladiatorial fights, animal baiting, and other spectacles that rely on humiliation and pain.

When you create a human society for your D&D game, consider what competitive leisure activities it prefers—especially if its sports involve skills or talents useful to adventurers. The following competitions are found in many human societies.

Horse Racing and Charioteering: Humans have a greater affinity for horses than members of other races, and many of their sports involve these animals.

At its simplest, a horse race is a series of opposed Ride checks made once per round. Rather than have each horse and rider move individually in initiative order, have each rider in the race make a Ride check. The rider with the highest result is in the lead, with other riders 5 feet back for each 2 points their result is lower than the leader's (but they go at least half the distance covered by the leader no matter how low they roll). For example, if the leader gets a 24 on her Ride check, a rider with a result of 23 would be neck-and-neck with the leader (but slightly behind), a rider with a 20 would be 10 feet behind, and a rider with a 14 would be 25 feet behind. The lead horse travels four times its speed on a straightaway and twice its speed if it has to turn.

When you use this system to resolve a horse race, assume that the competitors are successfully taking the spur mount

action discussed in the Ride skill description on page 80 of the *Player's Handbook*. If a racer doesn't want to spur his or her mount, simply assess a –4 penalty on Ride checks during the race.

While some horse races take place on fairly smooth tracks, it's common to include jumps or other obstacles. Use the leap rules in the Ride skill description to resolve jumps over obstacles. Racers who fall end their movement for that round. In the following round, a fallen rider must stand up (a move action), then attempt a fast mount (as per the Ride description) or spend a move action to remount the horse.

Chariot races function similarly to horse races, except that Profession (teamster) is the relevant skill. Leaping is nearly impossible; any jumping DCs are tripled.

King of the Ring: This game, which has dozens of names, takes place in a 20-foot-radius circle. Two competitors begin a match by standing at opposite edges of the circle, then running toward one another and attempting to bull rush their rival back outside the circle's boundary. Both competitors make bull rush attempts each round, except that neither side can make attacks of opportunity (unarmed attacks and grappling are against the rules).

A common variant of King of the Ring has more than two competitors at a time, with the winner being the last person remaining inside the ring. Another version of the game involves varying the terrain, with contestants trying to push each other off a log, out of a pond, or off a hillock.

Gambling: Humans love to wager and will bet on almost anything given the chance. Gambling can come in many forms, from cards, dice, and other games of chance, to betting on the outcome of horse racing, fighting tournaments, and the like. In lawful areas, particularly those with strict moral codes, gambling is either frowned upon or banned. In areas with looser laws and morality, gambling is out in the open and may be an important part of social interaction.

Gambling takes three forms. First, humans often bet on the outcome of someone else's efforts, such as wagering on a horse race.

Second, the gamblers themselves may participate in a game that incorporates both skill and chance. Most card games fall into this category. To resolve this sort of gambling, have the participants make a skill check every 10 minutes. The relevant skill is Profession (card gambler) for most card games and another Profession skill for games you invent yourself. The competitor with the highest check result wins an amount set by the DM: a typical pot for 10 minutes of play, depending on the wealth of the competitors and the circumstances of the game. The losing competitors lose as much as the winner receives, divided among themselves. In a five-person card game, for example, the winner might get 20 silver pieces after 10 minutes of

Humans relax after a hard day

Illus. by E. Cox

play, and each of the other four players would lose 5 silver pieces.

Competitors can employ other skills to improve their chances. If the game rewards bluffing and concealed motives, a Bluff check that's higher than everyone else's Sense Motive check earns the bluffer a bonus on his Profession check equal to the difference between his Bluff result and the highest Sense Motive result. If the game involves easily palmed tokens such as playing cards, a competitor can cheat by making a Sleight of Hand check opposed by all the other player's Spot checks. A successful Sleight of Hand check earns a bonus equal to the difference between the Sleight of Hand result and the highest Spot result. But unlike bluffing at cards, there's generally a game-ending consequence for failing this Sleight of Hand check: you've been caught cheating.

The third form of gambling encompasses games of pure chance, such as roulette or simple dice games. Because there's no skill involved, resolve this sort of gambling by rolling the relevant dice (if it's a game like craps) or by assigning a percentage chance of success and rolling percentile dice (if it's roulette or a similar game of chance that doesn't involve dice).

If you design a scenario involving gambling, make sure that PCs can't come out ahead simply by wagering on multiple outcomes. For example, betting on both horses in a race shouldn't make for a sure profit, and always betting black on a roulette wheel should result in the gradual diminishing of a player's stake. Make sure that the wagering authority ("the house") has a small but significant percentage advantage.

Other Games: *Complete Warrior* has information on jousting and gladiator battles, two other common forms of competition in human lands.

Roleplaying Application: Decide what your character's attitude is toward leisure in general—whether it's wasteful frivolity or a well-earned reward for hard work. Then consider what kinds of leisure your character especially likes or dislikes, looking at your abilities and skills for guidance. Brawny characters with the Improved Bull Rush feat would naturally gravitate toward King of the Ring as participants, and King of the Ring might also make a particularly good spectator sport for a low-Strength character who finds the display of might particularly impressive.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Every human society has its own artistic style and methods for expressing it. Human art covers the entire range of expression, from realistic to abstract, and the other races are often amazed at the artistic works that humans come up with.

Some human cultures prefer a stark, spare form that implies more than it shows, while others go for a much more ornate, baroque style. Humans also borrow heavily from other cultures, especially those nearby. A group of humans living along the edge of a large forest inhabited by elves and gnomes may fill their art with nature-related themes and softer, more natural colors. Humans living near dwarves might favor earth tones and intricately carved stonework.

Art Is Everywhere

Humans practice all forms of art: painting, sculpture, music, and a hundred other forms of artistic expression. Although dwarves produce fine sculptures and physical objects, gnomes create the funniest jokes and fables, and elves compose the most haunting music and poetry, humans have, at one time or another, created individual works that have outdone all these other races.

In places where humans struggle just to survive, artistic talent takes a back seat to more prosaic concerns, and individuals with a flair for creation either let it atrophy or channel it into a craft that allows them to express themselves while "doing something useful." Many a basketweaver, blacksmith, or potter has an artistic bent and includes decorative flourishes in the everyday items he or she makes.

The combination of utility and artistry means that humans decorate nearly everything, from the hem on a dress, to the handle of a wooden spoon, to the wall of the hut where they live. Other races channel their artists in a specific direction (the gnomes' love of gemcutting is a good example). But human artists like to adapt something, even if it's a completely mundane object, and make it serve an artistic, decorative function.

Art and Wealth

Regardless of their social class, humans enjoy beautiful art and do what they can to embellish decorative objects such as nice clothing and jewelry. Even the poorest humans use small bits of homemade jewelry or embroidery on their clothing. The higher the social status of a human, the greater his or her access to art. A rich and powerful human has dozens of clothing choices, wears multiple pieces of precious jewelry, and lives in a home where paintings hang on every wall. Among humans, art isn't enjoyed just for its own sake—it's a symbol of social status.

Art winds up in the hands of the wealthy and powerful because both skilled artists and the materials they use (such as gold, rare pigments, and fine silks) are often scarce. While all humans appreciate art to a degree, only a few actually produce it. The average human is not artistically inclined and leaves the creation of artwork to artists and bards. With relatively few humans creating art, the short supply of it is snatched up by the upper classes.

Art is a status symbol, but that doesn't necessarily mean that artists themselves have high social status. Just as the social status of performers varies among human cultures, so too does the status of painters, writers, and other artists. Some societies revere their artists and accord them an

elevated status, while others consider them second-class citizens and parasites that are too lazy to do "real work."

The Life of an Artisan

While most humans know at least a little about woodcraft, pottery, sewing, and other common disciplines, true mastery requires years of intense labor and study.

To become an artisan, a human child begins as an apprentice to a more experienced adult. His education includes years spent doing mundane chores for the master artisan, such as fetching water, preparing raw materials, and cleaning the workshop. Those apprentices who can get through these formative years are eventually taught the basics of their trade. After a few more years, if an apprentice shows promise and talent, he is then named a journeyman and can set off on his own to establish his name and reputation.

Roleplaying Application: Think about what forms of art and decoration your character appreciates, especially when it comes to assessing the value of a treasure hoard or buying new equipment. When your character becomes wealthy (as most do), decide what forms of art he or she will enjoy and display.

TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC

As the most adaptable and innovative of the races, humans are prolific creators of new ideas and items, whether magical or technological.

Humans blend a knack for experimentation with a fine balance of time-tested methods and intuitive leaps. They borrow heavily from other races and cultures, taking something that was already created, then expanding and improving on it to create an item never seen before. Future-focused humans are unlikely to say, "We can't try it because no one's ever done it that way." Humans rarely rest on their laurels after a major discovery and often use their discoveries to fuel research into even more radical ideas.

Travelers, Builders, and Traders

Human strides in technology run the gamut from exotic weapons to advanced pottery techniques. They are particularly adept in two areas: shipbuilding and castle construction. Humans have also applied their inventive nature to a third area of technical expertise: finance and commercial matters.

The drive to explore and expand often leads humans to the ocean shore—and beyond. More so than those of other races, humans build a dizzying array of seafaring craft, from heavy barges to sleek sailing ships to the longships and galleys that make up their navies. Ships enable humans to extend their reach to new lands, and they also make long-distance commerce more practical. Humans aren't just good shipbuilders, though—they have also mastered navigating the open ocean using both magical and astronomical means.

An old human wizard teaches her apprentice some arcane lore

Illus. by J. Nelson

While no one matches the dwarves' ability to construct underground fortresses, the best aboveground strongholds are of human manufacture. The crenellated walls and high towers that characterize a human castle require mastery of architecture, stonemasonry, and the sheer logistical challenge of moving the raw materials to the building site. In every aspect of castle construction—size, strength, and speed—humans are the leaders.

The third area in which humans enjoy unparalleled expertise is finance. Humans have an innate understanding of mercantile matters and have developed sophisticated techniques to track and account for wealth. Powerful trade guilds, complex tax structures, and stock ownership are human innovations that come into play whenever a lot of money is at stake. A halfling trade caravan typically splits its profits equally after it makes a sale at its destination—simple enough. But a human trade caravan probably has investors who receive profits according to their percentage of ownership, after the caravan pays wages for the guards, commissions for the negotiators, tariffs for one or more trade guilds, interest on the loans that financed the journey, and taxes to one or more governments. A simple human merchant doesn't have to worry about this sort of complexity, but it's a fact of life on the more lucrative caravan routes.

Magic

Elves have an affinity for arcane magic, and many extraplanar races have a closer connection to the divine, but humans have access to magic whatever its source. As with other tools, humans adapt divine and arcane magic to further their ambitions, whether noble or craven.

Divine magic is an expression of human diversity and human energy—specifically, the humans' drive to emulate the deities themselves. Humans regard divine magic as a tool to be used both for self-improvement and to advance a deity's cause on the Material Plane.

Humans have a practical attitude toward divine magic. When a cleric casts a spell, it's not just an act of devotion to the deity who provides the divine power behind the spell—it's also a tool that advances the ambitions of the caster. It's significant that the two gods who have ascended to divinity within living memory, Vecna and St. Cuthbert, were once both human. They represent the ultimate ambition of the human divine spellcaster: to use divine magic to make oneself more divine.

Clerics often act as the backbone of a community, even if that community can't agree on which god to worship. Humans are a race with multiple faiths and views of the universe, so disagreements and even open warfare can result between clerics who can't agree on whose god is best. Most other races have a single deity devoted to the protection and advancement of that race: Corellon Larethian for the elves, Yondalla for the halflings, and so on. Humans don't have such a deity (although Zarus, described below, could become such a deity), instead dividing their allegiance among gods of every alignment and concern.

A divine spellcaster's place in society depends almost entirely on which god she worships. The high priest in a theocracy might be the pinnacle of the social order, but the cleric of an unpopular or outlawed god might have to hide her allegiance, administering her faith to a secret cult of like-minded worshipers.

Arcane spellcasters, on the other hand, are almost always in the middle or upper class of human society, because they have either the sorcerer's force of personality or the wizard's reasoning and intellectual prowess. Only in human societies with little social mobility do arcane spellcasters remain in the lower class for long.

Human sorcerers stand out from the crowd as vibrant, charismatic individuals with a flair for the magical arts. Societies that have a close relationship with local dragons revere sorcerers as beings of true power and respect. In tyrannical societies, sorcerers stand out like bright lights in a dim room whether they're part of the ruling class or leaders of a restive underclass. If they live in a land where arcane power is a liability, sorcerers use their social skills (and the fact that they aren't carrying a spellbook around all the time) to conceal their powers from their fellow humans.

Wizards tend to flock together in human societies, sharing magical knowledge and the results of their arcane research with each other. Humans regard wizardry as an academic discipline, so most would-be wizards learn the secrets of arcane power at magical colleges. These schools also become repositories of knowledge and wisdom and may double as mundane colleges for those who do not have magical skill. It's also common for humans to view wizardry as a skilled trade, so magical knowledge propagates through the apprentice–master relationships that govern other trades.

Varied Attitudes Toward Magic

Humans, the most innovative of spellcasters, can also be among the most superstitious. In societies where magic is rare, superstition and fear concerning spellcasters are particularly acute. Due to a subconscious jealousy of power, humans from lower social classes sometimes view powerful magic with awe and suspicion, especially if it's arcane magic or an effect they haven't seen before.

In lands where magic is routine, human spellcasters live well, providing the people with ways to ease their daily burdens . A wizard isn't a purveyor of black magic, just another artisan to be employed when needed. But humans respect power (and generally want more of it for themselves), so they are wise enough to treat spellcasters of any ilk with a modicum of respect.

Roleplaying Application: Over the course of your adventuring career, you'll undoubtedly see mechanical devices and strange magic undreamed of by most humans.

How you react to these sights says a lot about your human nature. It's normal to be wary of powerful technology or magic, but a human's ambition and adaptiveness often lead to curiosity about the mysterious and new—whether that curiosity is healthy or not.

For example, an elf might bring a mysterious artifact back to elf loremasters for study, and a dwarf might bring the artifact to his clan chief for wise consideration of its fate, but a human might start experimenting with the artifact right away and is almost certainly scheming about how to best put the artifact to use.

HUMANS AT WAR

Humans are infamous for being a warlike race. Many of the most horrific and devastating wars are the result of human aggression, often directed against other humans. Whenever humans are pioneers in magic and technology, it's often because they seek an edge on the battlefield.

Military readiness and organization varies widely from one human society to another. Some societies are extremely militant and organized, with large standing armies that are disciplined and well equipped. Other humans wage war in a ragtag, chaotic fashion, charging into combat with little regard for safety or cohesion. Either way, humans are a force to be reckoned with, if for no other reason than their sheer numbers and instinct for survival. Humans aren't fearsome combatants individually, but they fight with tenacity and often show brilliance on the battlefield. Human societies sometimes go to war collectively, as an entire nation mobilizes for an offensive crusade or a defensive effort. When humans go to war, they do so in the thousands.

At an early age, young humans learn how to handle at least one weapon, even if it's just a knife or a farm implement they use every day. Humans living near the wilderness are typically also handy with a crossbow, sling, or other ranged weapon used to hunt game. Humans know that war can erupt wherever they live, so they're often ready when marauding bandits assault their village or a hostile army besieges their city. Other races remark how human lands are dotted with fortresses even no hostile borders lie within hundreds of miles.

Human Armies

Human armies tend to have more different kinds of soldiers and more special-purpose units than armies of other races. Humans often create mixed units in which a spellcaster or two provides support for a dozen melee combatants. Every character class has its place in a human army, from bards who use trumpet fanfares to inspire their comrades,

When a human army marches, foes had better take notice

Illus. by W. England

to clerics prepared with healing magic, to wizard snipers that use *magic missiles* to harry enemy officers.

While older races often have army units whose composition is set by centuries of tradition, human armies will change in composition to better fight their enemies. A human army facing a skeleton horde, for example, will recruit every good-aligned cleric it can find and have its blacksmiths work overtime to supply soldiers with bludgeoning maces.

Life in the Army

Humans who show talent for fighting get willingly recruited or unwillingly conscripted into their society's army. In many human societies, the law requires at least a brief term of service in the sovereign's fighting force. In others, would-be soldiers may have to compete for the right to join the army, especially its elite units.

In a strong, organized army, the soldier's life may be considerably better than the average commoner's. A soldier gets regular meals, shelter, clothing, and at least a few coins in wages—all things a commoner must struggle for. But the downside is obvious: a risk of death, and certainly a separation from family and community.

More chaotic human societies may not keep a standing army. The society expects its members to know how to fight and to rise to the occasion when called. Glory derived from success in battle is a major social benefit in such societies, because your friends and neighbors have seen your prowess on the battlefield firsthand.

Human Military Tactics

Human generals are quick to adapt to changing circumstances, and most would rather attack than defend. They display the same traits as humans in other fields: tenacity, inventiveness, and ambition.

The variety within human culture and society leads to a wide array of military units, but a couple of military tactics typify human armies: the extensive use of cavalry, and constructing and destroying aboveground fortifications.

Cavalry: Humans have a relationship with horses that stretches back beyond their oldest history books. And as long as humans have had horses, humans have ridden them into battle.

Human generals particularly prize the mounted knight, because the knight minimizes human weaknesses while accentuating human strengths. An individual human is relatively fragile on a D&D battlefield but becomes a lot tougher once encased in armor and attached to a 1,000-pound fighting animal. The speed of a horse gives a human general the ability to react quickly to a changing situation on the battlefield. Thus, a unit of knights improves the whole army's adaptivity—a key human trait in war or peace.

Fortresses: Other races (especially gnomes) remark that humans are never at peace; they're always waging war or preparing for war. One reason for this attitude is the human castles that dominate the landscape and the walls that surround almost every human settlement of any size.

A network of well-stocked castles is essential to the administration of any human nation. A human army must garrison its own lands to guard against incursions by bandits, rebels, and anyone else seeking to thwart the will of the land's rulers. No army can be everywhere at once, of course, but strategically placed castles can provide safe storage for provisions and other supplies the army needs when it arrives on the scene. A castle also serves as a visible symbol of the ruling authority and what it represents: protection in a dangerous world.

Sieges: For every army encamped within a fortress, another army is surrounding it, trying to knock down the walls or starve the defenders into submission. Humans incorporate siege engines such as catapults and battering rams into their war plans, and they'll surely bombard the walls of a stronghold they're besieging. But if the armies are evenly matched, a stalemate often results while the invading army tries to starve out the defenders. In such a situation, a war between human armies can last for years or even decades—an exceedingly long time, given the relatively short human life span.

Fortresses and sieges are both central to humans at war, because warfare is all about control of territory. Humans are ambitious and expansionist, so they regard warfare as an effective way of acquiring territory or defending it from the predations of others.

Adventure Seed: Dealing with a besieged castle can be an exciting adventure, no matter what side of the fight the PCs are on. Characters defending the castle might have to sneak out to disrupt the invaders, or creep through enemy lines while transporting critical provisions and supplies. PCs working with an invading army can use magic, stealth, or subterfuge to sneak into a castle and cause mayhem within while the army attacks from without.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Human societies exhibit the same psychological traits that individual humans do—they tend to be ambitious, adaptable, and aggressive. Some traits are stronger in a given society than others, of course. A fantasy culture inspired by the Vikings might be quite aggressive but harbor no societywide ambitions beyond living to plunder again next year. One inspired by the ancient Egyptians might work to build great monuments and be the dominant culture of its time, but might have a hard time coping with the inevitable change of history's turning pages.

SOCIETY'S DRIVE TO ORGANIZE

Human societies thrive on organization, perhaps because it's the only way to keep such a varied people under

control. A halfling or a gnome might enjoy cataloging a personal collection for the personal satisfaction that organization provides. But human societies regard organization as a means to an end: a more productive, efficient community.

Take city streets as an example. In human cities, the streets are straight whenever possible, intersecting with others to form a grid pattern. Elves regard a grid layout as unimaginative, and their communities often have winding roads that encourage contemplation of the natural world. The underground cities of the dwarves have a regular network of tunnels them, because the dwarves find regular patterns to be inherently pleasing.

Humans save their creativity for other aspects of their lives, however, and they don't necessarily like a street grid for aesthetic reasons. They like a straight grid of roads because the grid makes travel across the city faster and because it's easier to assign addresses and give directions if the roads follow a predictable pattern. In other words, the organization is just a means to the end of societal efficency and "progress."

Most tellingly, when the landscape does not allow for straight roads, humanity forces the landscape into shape, bending the world to the society's will. Others call this arrogance, but humans call it progress.

SOCIAL CLASS

A fundamental tenet of human society is social class, which is a manifestation of the human drive to organize. Some societies offer more class mobility than others. Societies that esteem battlefield prowess, artistic skill, and mercantile wealth tend to have more turnover in the upper classes than societies in which social standing is a matter of birth and lineage. Some human cultures have a greater gulf between the upper and lower classes than others. The nobles in a decadent, imperial society probably talk, walk, and act completely differently from the lower-class "untouchables" they ignore. In a frontier society, however, the landowning baron is only marginally better off than the military captain, the skilled blacksmith, or the local priest.

No matter how a society's social classes are organized, humans from that society know the means for social climbing and what sorts of failure result in a fall from social grace. Even in societies where individual merit doesn't result in social promotion, parents can always hope their children "marry well" and rise through society's ranks.

Roleplaying Application: Because human society is keenly aware of social class, consider what your family's social status was during your childhood. Once your adventuring career begins, you can dress and act like a member of whatever social class you wish—and if you survive your first few adventures, you'll probably be rich compared to most other humans. But whether you're an alley kid who resents the airs of nobility or a royal scion determined to live like one of "the people," your social class has a major impact on how you see the world and how others treat you.

In the real world, having a high socioeconomic status has natural advantages. But in the D&D world, being from the upper class doesn't prepare a human for an adventurer's life any better than a lower-class upbringing. When an upper-class child is learning courteous behavior and elaborate social customs, her lower-class counterpart is getting into fights in alleys and picking pockets in the bazaar square. Each child learns something potentially useful, but neither skill set is inherently better than the other. Upper-class youths have more access to education (especially about magical matters), but lower-class youths deal with rigors and dangers similar to those faced by full-grown adventurers. Social class guides what kind of preparation you've had for an adventurer's life, but it doesn't provide you with a greater or lesser degree of preparation.

THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

The immediate family—two parents and their children—is the building block of most human societies. The family's branches extend to include grandparents and cousins, and in many places humans live in large tribes. Nevertheless, humans have an innate respect for the bond between siblings and between parent and child. The typical human places the welfare of his immediate family over that of anyone else, even other relatives.

This focus on the immediate family is one consequence of human mobility and expansion. Humans relocate often, and they don't usually bring their entire extended family with them. Dwarves and elves, on the other hand, settle in one place and live there for centuries, so the community eventually becomes one extended family.

The short human life span also places greater emphasis on the immediate family. Because only a few generations of humans are alive at one time, the ties between one generation and the next are particularly strong. A human simply can't have the sort of bond with a great-grandparent that's routine among the dwarves, for example, because that great-grandparent might not live long enough to see the child's birth and almost certainly won't be around long enough for the great-grandchild to reach adulthood.

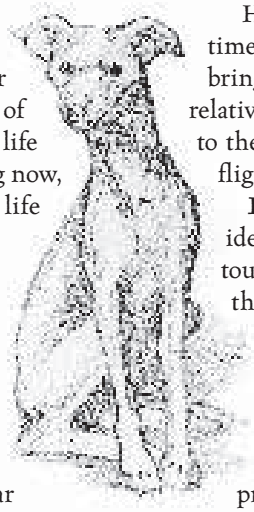
In human families, parents expect at least some of their children to follow in their career footsteps. Children apprentice themselves to a parent skilled in a trade, learning the family business throughout childhood. In farm families, children gradually do more and more chores around the homestead until they're accomplished farmers themselves.

Because human couples often have more than one child, not everyone can inherit the family business, and the family farm can be divided into only so many pieces. The oldest children usually have precedence in matters of inheritance,

a custom that tends to drive younger siblings away from home and into other organizations such as religion and the military.

While many human parents train their children in the family livelihood, some encourage their offspring to seek new and better opportunities. If a man is a butcher but his son wants to become a blacksmith, the father often supports that desire. Blacksmiths have more community respect and make more money than butchers, after all. As long as his children earn respect and a good living, a parent can easily forgive a child for leaving the family occupation behind.

Roleplaying Application: Give some thought to the members of your immediate family. You don't have to write down a whole family tree before you pick up that twenty-sider, but if you establish the tenor of a few family relationships, your character will be the richer for it. "Mama didn't raise no dummies," your character might say after doing something particularly clever. You might hate wearing leather because your father was a tanner and you hated the smell of the tanning process. Imagine what your family life was like, what your family members are doing now, and how they feel about your undertaking the life of an adventurer.



RELYING LESS ON TRADITION

Human social customs tend to be more community-based than individual-based. An elf, for example, remembers being involved in or affected by a war against the orcs that happened centuries ago and doesn't need a particular holiday or ceremony to mark the occasion. But humans do not live that long. Instead, they pass on their traditions to their children and disseminate them throughout the community. Thus, a human village might celebrate "Orc Surrender Day" long after the participants in the battle have died.

Humans use societal traditions as a sort of memory bank that records their history, with individuals remembering the important deeds of the past and passing the stories on. Because no living human performed or experienced those deeds, the traditions based on them don't have the same impact. A dwarf bard might fondly recall the epic he wrote for the king decades ago. A human, on the other hand, takes pride in the song his grandfather wrote for the queen, but he won't waste an afternoon thinking about it, and he strives to write even better songs. The individual, present-day creation of a new song adds to his family's prestige and proves that he's a better songwriter than his ancestors were. For a human composer, his new song has far more merit than an old song his grandfather wrote.

HUMANS AND OTHER RACES

Because of their ability to thrive in almost any climate and terrain, humans often find themselves coming into contact with other races, whether they are wanted or not. Some human societies see their nonhuman neighbors as allies, trading partners, or someone to ignore. Other nations may see nonhumans as subjects to be conquered or strangers to be feared.

Dwarves: Humans look up to the stalwart traditions, deep convictions, and dedication to family and honor that are central to the dwarves' outlook. A dwarf's martial skills and beautiful stonecraft are also worthy of admiration. While human and dwarf communities don't always see eye to eye, the two races have always been allies, or at least cordial neighbors.

Humans who live close to a dwarf stronghold sometimes model their society after the dwarves, which can bring great joy and pride to the dwarven heart. Still, the relatively freewheeling spirit of humans runs counter to the slower-paced culture of dwarves; humans seem flighty and impatient.

Elves: Much of humanity considers elves to be idealized humans: hauntingly beautiful beings in touch with their own inner power. Humans admire the sheer beauty in everything that elves do, say, or produce, but they have a hard time understanding the long-range foresight of elves, and many wrongly believe that elves are indifferent to the plights of the world.

Humans who live close to elf communities may prefer the smooth patois of Elven over their own crude-sounding language and may dress in the comfortable elven style. Elves regard such efforts with a mixture of paternal satisfaction and bemusement.

Goliaths: Most humans find the hulking goliaths (described in *Races of Stone*) to be more than a little frightening. A goliath's close resemblance to a giant (albeit a smaller one) triggers a human's primal fear of similar creatures such as ogres and trolls. Some closed-minded humans refuse to consider that goliaths and giants might be different. Many humans operate from the assumption of a stereotype—"large equals dumb"—and treat goliaths accordingly.

Some mountain-dwelling humans have overcome their fear of these gentle beings and have forged close relationships with goliaths, including limited trade agreements and pacts of mutual assistance against common foes.

Gnomes: Humans have a rather patronizing though cordial view of gnomes, whom they regard as being comical and more than a bit silly. Their initial exposure to gnome humor delights most humans, but they quickly become annoyed when the smaller beings do not let up with their incessant pranks. However, the gnomes'

capacity for working with magic and technology amazes humans, who go to great lengths to obtain both skills from gnomes.

Humans dwelling in the same hills and forests as gnomes find them to be fine neighbors that are willing to help out with common problems.

Half-Elves: To humans, half-elves are only marginally less aloof than elves and seem to possess the same eerie grace that humans find both intriguing and a bit difficult to comprehend. Humans tend to treat half-elves as they would treat elves, but a little more kindly as they remind themselves, "Hey, this guy is half-human, too."

In areas where elves and humans live together, half-elves are far more common, and they gain more understanding and acceptance from humans, who view them as ideal mediators between the two races. Some half-elves thrive in such a role and become an integral part of these communities. Other half-elves chafe at always being treated like they're all elf or all human, so they get away from both parent races as soon as possible.

Half-orcs: In most places, humans and orcs have engaged in violence for as long as anyone can remember. Despite this animosity, orcs and humans have been known to interbreed. In human lands, half-orcs are second-class citizens, and few humans make an effort to see the human side of such individuals. Humans lay the burden of proof squarely on the half-orc: "Prove you're better than an orc."

In those rare areas where humans and orcs coexist peacefully, the lot of a half-orc is slightly better. Some half-orcs hold high positions within human settlements or act as liaisons between the two cultures.

In purely human communities, half-orcs are often treated with scorn and derision, respected and feared only for their strength and ferocity.

Halflings: Since the two races have lived side by side for thousands of years, most humans have a strong affinity for halflings. Humans respect halflings for their drive, curiosity, and willingness to get along. The kinship is so close that some human societies prefer living alongside halflings to living alongside other human cultures.

Human and halfling communities are sometimes integrated into one another, and many human cities have a halfling neighborhood where the smaller race can retain a sense of cultural heritage.

Despite this peaceful coexistence, many humans retain the impression that halflings are whimsical or cute, much to the dismay of these small folk. Over the years, halflings have learned either to tolerate such attitudes or to redouble their efforts to act "fiercer than the big folk."

Illumians: The race of illumians (described in Chapter 3) is young even by human standards, so illumians remain an enigma to the humans that surround them. Humans who have lived among illumians say that the sigil-enhanced race is a lot like humanity—if anything, they're more ambitious, more adaptive, and more future-focused than humans are.

RELIGION

Humans are both more religious and less religious than members of the other races. They are less religious in that many humans do not care about religion, and no deity can claim the worship of more than a fraction of humanity. Yet they are more religious in that their variety comfortably supports dozens of faiths, each with adherents more numerous than those of many nonhuman deities.

Less Religious: Humans' drive and energy sometimes get in the way of religious matters. Some humans are too practical or too busy with mundane concerns to spend time praying to a being they cannot see, have never met, and receive nothing from. Humans generally demand tangible assistance from a deity's church before they offer their fealty in return. Humans naturally juggle multiple allegiances (to family, to country, to community, and so forth), and some just don't have room in their lives for a religious relationship.

Another barrier that keeps humans from embracing religion is that humans don't have a cohesive mythology and a set pantheon. The dwarves know that Moradin fathered them, and the gnomes know they're the creation of Garl Glittergold. Humans are not so certain of their origins, and no major deity demands their exclusive allegiance. Some humans claim that Pelor is the greatest of the gods, but others worship Heironeous or Kord with equal fervor. Because humanity has so many gods, no one deity can win the allegiance of the entire race.

More Religious: Many humans are adaptable enough to work all sorts of religious practices into their daily lives. Once a bond between deity and human worshiper is established, it quickly grows strong. "Pelor says I have to get up before dawn to pray to him," thinks the human. "But Pelor makes sure the fields around the city grow lots of wheat, so it's definitely worth it." In exchange for a benefit, whether tangible or intangible, a human is willing to change her routine and follow the dictates of a particular religion.

Some humans do worship a deity in a profound and deep way. In fact, those humans with faith are so staunch in their convictions that their singlemindedness frightens even dwarves. After all, dwarves know Moradin is their ultimate father, and that he watches over them—it's an obvious fact that no one in dwarven culture would deny. But a deeply religious human has chosen a deity from among dozens of equally powerful gods, and she maintains that religious allegiance despite being surrounded with humans who don't agree with that choice.

HOW HUMANS WORSHIP

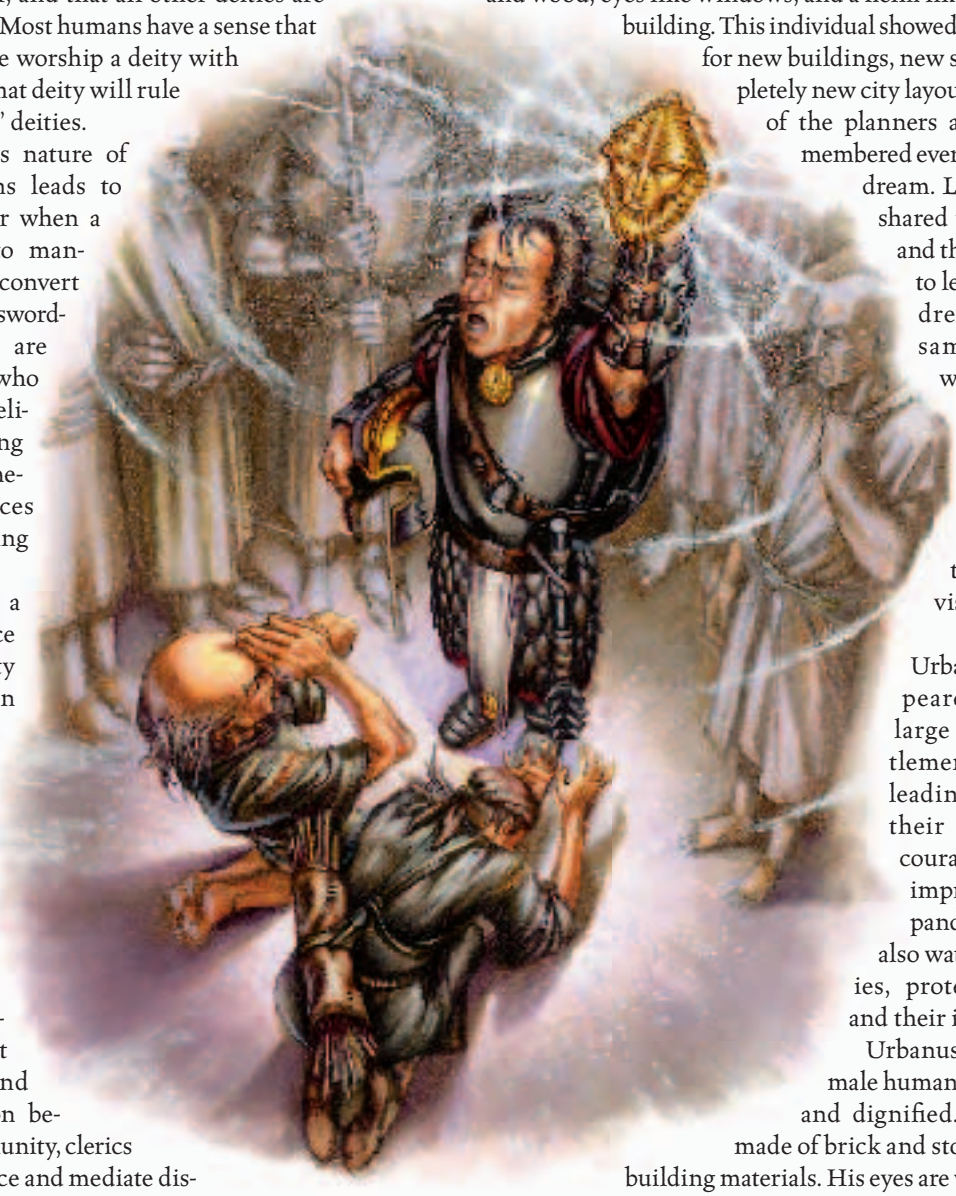
Religious humans tend to ascribe humanlike ambitions to the gods they worship. Truly devout humans are convinced

that their chosen god is the greatest deity imaginable. Most dwarves, for example, wouldn't bother arguing that Moradin is greater than Pelor. Moradin is simply their god, and the nondwarven gods are welcome to take care of nondwarven concerns. But a human who worships Pelor might claim that the Shining One is the only deity worthy of prayer, and that all other deities are Pelor's inferiors. Most humans have a sense that if enough people worship a deity with enough fervor, that deity will rule all other, "lesser" deities.

The ambitious nature of human religions leads to conflict and war when a religion tries to mandate worship or convert new followers at swordpoint. Humans are the only people who fight extensive religious wars among themselves, something other races find both puzzling and frightening.

Religion has a positive influence on human society as well, and even nonreligious humans regard religious humans highly. Because they have access to a wide range of helpful magic, clerics receive friendly treatment from most humans. Beyond casting spells on behalf of the community, clerics offer useful advice and mediate disputes, and many good-aligned religions feed the hungry and clothe the poor. Human cities have temples to most good or neutral deities, and towns often have small churches and shrines for the major faiths.

Because humanity has dozens of gods, new deities sometimes appear and new religions take root in human culture. Unlike those other races, humans believe it is possible for someone to rise to sainthood and then to godhood, as St. Cuthbert did. The two deities presented below have small but growing churches behind them.



Illus. by R. Spencer

Jozan pauses in his travels to administer Pelor's healing touch

URBANUS

Lesser God (Neutral Good)

One of the newest human deities is Urbanus, the god of cities. One day, in their dreams, the city planners began seeing a strange figure, a man with skin of brick and stone and wood, eyes like windows, and a helm like the roof of a building. This individual showed them designs for new buildings, new streets, a completely new city layout. When each of the planners awoke, he remembered every detail of the dream. Later, the men shared their dreams, and they were awed to learn that each dream was the same. The city was built following the new designs, and the planners dedicated it to this strange visitor.

Since then, Urbanus has appeared in every large human settlement. He visits leading citizens in their dreams, encouraging them to improve and expand the city. He also watches over cities, protecting them and their inhabitants.

Urbanus appears as a male human, middle-aged and dignified. His skin is made of brick and stone and other building materials. His eyes are windows. His teeth are paving stones. His helmet (or perhaps it is his hair) is a domed spire. When he speaks, his voice sounds like wagon wheels and church bells and water pumps. Urbanus is a god recently come into existence, and has limited scope—he has no power outside cities. Within them, however, his will is supreme. Though primarily a human deity, Urbanus accepts the worship of anyone who lives in a city.

Portfolio: Cities, growth, improvement.

Domains: City (see page 162), Good, Knowledge, Protection.

Cleric Training: Urbanus finds his own clerics, appearing to them in their dreams. He selects people who live in cities and love them, people who want to make their city safer and cleaner and a nicer place to live. Urbanus sends these people to his priests, who teach them familiarity with every inch of the city and show them how to appreciate it fully. His followers are expert guides, and they often show visitors around.

Quests: Urbanus believes that cities need to grow, but not always by becoming larger. Sometimes they need to destroy an evil lurking within them, or to straighten crooked streets or repair old buildings. His followers often lead campaigns to restore old city sections, and they also help organize neighborhood watches.

Prayers: Prayers to Urbanus center around the beauty of the city. His worshipers mention beloved locations or elements as a way to attract his attention and win his love.

Shrines: Urbanus has shrines at major locations in most cities—the city hall, the main bridge, the front gates, and so forth. Small plaques are attached to these locations, letting his worshipers know that these spots are sacred to him. Nothing else is needed—the entire city is his temple.

Rites: Urbanus presides over the dedications of new buildings, the meetings to plan new city sections, and any other large, peaceful gatherings within city limits. His ceremonies are short but poetic, often featuring original poems or songs about some element of the city.

Holy symbol of Urbanus

Herald and Allies: A massive iron golem is Urbanus's herald. His planar allies are flesh, clay, and iron golems. (Urbanus typically sends golems as planar allies, contrary to the spell description.)

Favored Weapon: Heavy mace.

ZARUS

Greater God (Lawful Evil)

Long ago, according to legend, Zarus was the first man, created by the world itself. No deity had a hand in his creation, because no deity could have conceived such a perfect creature. Members of the other races trembled to see him, for they knew that he was their superior in every way. His grace surpassed that of the elves, his sturdiness astounded the dwarves, his crafts were the awe of gnomes and halflings everywhere.

As long as Zarus was alone, the other races allowed him to live, secure in the knowledge that he could not reproduce. But Zarus was not content. He spoke with the world and begged for a mate—and it created his wife, Astra. She was as perfect a woman as Zarus was a man, and the other races trembled yet again, fearing that this perfect couple would spawn a new race that would overshadow them all. To prevent this, the leaders of each race gathered in secret and plotted Zarus's demise. They brewed a poison and mixed it in fine wine, which they gave to him as a wedding present.

Zarus knew that the others plotted his death, but he could not honorably refuse the gift. He toasted their health, and drank. The poison worked swiftly, but as Zarus felt his life departing the world took pity upon him and elevated him to godhood. Now Zarus looked down upon the world, and he wiped away the tears of his wife Astra. "Do not weep for me, beloved," he consoled her, "for I am now a god, and set to watch over our people. You will bear me children—they already lie in your womb—and these will be the start of our race. All the other races will quake in fear, knowing that they cannot match us."

This is the story told in the *Book of Zarus*, the holy scripture of his church. Zarus is called "the true human god" and is considered the only god who places humans before all others. He cares nothing for the other races, only for humanity, and encourages his followers to prove themselves better than any nonhuman. Unfortunately, he also fosters the belief that humans deserve to rule the world, treating other races as servants. His priests teach that other races are inferior, in need of human guidance—and human masters.

The clerics of Zarus encourage conquest and slavery. The worst sin a human can commit, according to the Church of Zarus, is to mate with a nonhuman and produce a child. This child is a taint on the race and must be removed.

Zarus appears as an incredibly handsome human male in his prime, suffused with a golden glow. Zarus encourages his followers and priests to become as perfect as possible, and to dominate other races.

Portfolio: Humanity, domination, perfection.

Domains: Destiny (see page 163), Evil, Law, Strength, War.

Cleric Training: Zarus's priests look for attractive, healthy youths who show pride in their abilities and arrogance toward anyone weaker. They recruit these people by offering to make them the best they can be. These acolytes are subjected to strict training, honing their physiques, and at the same time they are taught that humanity is the superior race and deserves to rule the world. These young

Illus. by W. England

clerics learn both how to give rousing speeches and how to wage war. They begin preaching in villages and towns, spreading their message.

Quests: Zarus sends his followers to destroy enclaves of other races, kill their heroes and leaders, and steal their artifacts. He encourages human armies to conquer nonhuman lands and subjugate their people.

Prayers: Zarus prefers action to words, and his followers pray to him by exercising and by taking part in athletic competitions where they can demonstrate their superiority. Every morning they perform their exercises, vowing to be the best they can be and to demonstrate to other races that humans are superior in every way.

Temples: Zarus's temples are handsome structures, not elaborate but extemely well made and with tasteful decorations. The walls are covered with tapestries depicting mankind's talents: scenes of hunting, farming, weaving, and other occupations. The altar is always a gold statue of a perfect human male, a representation of Zarus himself.

Rites: Zarus's worshipers pray to him before a physical competition, before a war, and before entering the territory of another race. Ceremonies are short and direct, and require physical exertion.

Holy symbol of Zarus

Illus. by W. England

Herald and Allies: Zarus has no herald—he claims he needs none. He sends Medium, Large, and Huge elementals in response to *planar ally* spells.

Favored Weapon: Greatsword.

OTHER FORMS OF FAITH

Humans have demonstrated, over the centuries, that they can believe almost anything they choose, however strange it sounds.

Pantheism: Some humans worship an entire pantheon of gods—praying to Kord for strength, to Heironeous for valor, and to Boccob for insight. Urbanus fits easily into a pantheistic society, where religious scholars place him as a servant or ally of Heironeous or Pelor. Zarus is more difficult to place in a pantheon, since his worshipers insist that humanity has no other god. Even so, Zarus's followers believe in Moradin, Garl Glittergold, and the other nonhuman deities; Zarus just wants those deities destroyed or subjugated.

Monotheism: A human "unity church" claims that every known deity is simply one facet of a greater being. This being, known only as All-Father, is the true creator of the universe and everything in it. The church believes that All-Father appears differently to different races because he presents himself in a way each being can understand. But no matter what the form, it's All-Father who is actually providing guidance and divine power.

A common criticism of the unity church is that some deities are evil, and many gods war against one another. All-Father's followers claim these apparent contradictions are merely tests of faith.

Deism: Another form of religion posits that none of the gods exist as deities per se; they're just powerful outsiders with delusions of grandeur. The true creator of the universe is essentially unknowable because the creator abandoned the universe after creating it, leaving powerful outsiders to set themselves up as figureheads used to personify ideals. The only true power, they claim, is the universe itself, which has no consciousness or personality, but responds through effort to the will of sentient creatures.

HISTORY AND FOLKLORE

Humans are the youngest of the major races, which means their history is not as long as that of their neighbors. The combination of a short time in the world and an amazing variety of human cultures creates a rich tapestry of folk tales and historical events, but few myths and legends that reach across cultural boundaries.

For humans, relatively recent historical events function as myths and legends. Human children might quiver at the story of St. Cuthbert and the dragon, for example, and pass it to their offspring in turn. A young human fighter might be inspired by a tale of the Lost Legion's Crusade. But in the D&D world, there are elves and dwarves for whom the Lost Legion's Crusade isn't a legend—it's a vivid memory from their own lifetimes. Some older dragons have firsthand knowledge of St. Cuthbert's battle against the dragon.

Human history becomes human legend with great rapidity, but in most campaign worlds, the recent history of humanity is the recent history of the world. Because humans are so widespread and exert such a strong influence on global events, almost every society—human or otherwise—knows the major wars, disasters, and triumphs that comprise human history.

Much of humanity's early history, from primitive ages when recordkeeping was less important than survival, has been lost. Scholars and bards have struggled to find evidence from the dawn of human existence, and have created tales around what they have discovered and what they believe happened.

Roleplaying Application: Human history has more recent events of importance than the history of any other race. Think about which historical events resonate with your character. Your character might treat gnomes kindly because she is ashamed of Dessloch's gnome purges a decade ago. Your character might revere the pioneers in the Caravan of Istagarrai, founders of the first human settlements in your area. The history your character chooses says a lot about his attitude toward his people, and toward himself.

MYTHIC ORIGINS

While humans have a rich, detailed recent history to draw mythic inspiration from, they don't have as rich a trove of humanitywide myths. For example, humans don't have a widely accepted creation story. Instead, each culture has its own story of how humans came to be—even nonhuman cultures such as the elves and dwarves. The majority of humans refuse to accept any nonhuman's version of humanity's origins—even accounts from outsiders who claim to have been there. Humans believe that such accounts are biased against humanity (and indeed, many play on less than flattering human stereotypes).

Most human histories agree on one point—that humanity did not have an illustrious beginning. Only the *Book of Zarus* claims otherwise.

Tale of Clay: Perhaps the most popular myth among human cultures is the Tale of Clay. According to this bit of lore, the deities had gathered together to discuss their various races, and the place of those races in the world. None of the gods had seen the others' creations.

To demonstrate what he was saying, Corellon Larethian took a lump of clay from the ground and shaped it to resemble the elves. When he was done speaking, Moradin took the clay and altered it to match the dwarves he had just created. Each god followed suit, so that the clay looked like each of the races in turn.

When twilight came, the deities returned to their homes, leaving the clay forgotten on the ground. The touch of so many deities had woken the clay to life, and it began to move. It tried to stand, but it faltered because its shape and appearance kept changing, fluctuating between the different races it had displayed.

The lump of clay knew it would have to choose a single form. But to favor one god's creation over another's seemed impossible, so the clay compromised. It took features from each of the races and merged them together to form a new design, reminiscent of each but unlike all.

When the gods discovered the clay the next day, they were so impressed they allowed it to live, and gave it a mate, designed as a combination of each race's females. These were the first humans, and because each god had blessed their union, they flourished, and their children spread across the world.

Dwarf's Fall: A good example of a human creation myth told by nonhumans is the Dwarf's Fall. Long ago, the tale goes, a dwarf was walking home. It began to rain heavily, but the dwarf trudged on. Then his boot slipped in the mud and he fell backward, his heavy body sinking into the soaked earth. Grumbling, the dwarf pulled himself free and continued on his way, leaving his outline pressed into the mud.

As the rain continued, it filled that outline. The rain turned to ice, and ice began to form above the outline, shaping the top portion of the dwarf as well. For three days and three nights the wind howled and snow fell. On the fourth day, the sun rose, and the ice and snow melted away. The ice replica of the dwarf cracked and disintegrated, leaving behind a creature cast in the dwarf's image. But the ground there slanted slightly, so the outline slid downhill, during the rain and snow. Thus the new creature was taller and slimmer than the original dwarf. Thus, from the outline of a dwarf rose the first man.

The Tale of Oratea: A halfling folk tale has humanity born of older races in a much more literal way. Oratea was a beautiful female halfling, and many of her own kind wooed her. Then she encountered a pair of travelers, a tall slender elf named Terian and a stout dwarf named Koemac.

The travelers both loved her and demanded that she choose one of them as her mate. Oratea was greedy and insisted that she would wed both of them or no one at all. Finally, Terian and Koemac relented and were both married to Oratea.

Months later, Oratea became pregnant. But the gods, looking down, frowned upon her for her arrogance and greed. They caused her two husbands to become jealous and to demand that she choose one of them and be done with the other.

After much argument, the husbands declared that the baby would be the deciding factor. Whichever father it resembled would stay, and the other one would leave, never to return. But when Oratea gave birth, she became the mother of twins.

When the fathers heard the news, they groaned, suspectuing that one child would have elf heritage and the other would have dwarf blood. But it was not to be so simple. One baby belonged to Terian and other to Koemac, but the deities made both babies resemble both fathers, blending their features together.

Terian and Koemac, recognizing this as a sign of the gods' displeasure, fled. Oratea died of a broken heart, leaving her children to make their way in the world. The deities took pity on the babies and helped them to survive. Eventually the children grew to adulthood, married, and bore more children. Oratea's grandchildren also had features that were a mixture of elf, dwarf, and halfling. These were the first humans.

The Broken Mold: Every myth agrees that humanity was the last major race created—every myth but one, that

is. The Myth of the Broken Mold contends that long ago, the gods gathered to create a race of lesser beings with which they could populate the world. The deities labored together in a secret chamber, each offering suggestions, and finally they reached a consensus. They carved a mold, and when all the gods added their personal touches and approved the details, a being was cast from that mold.

Emerging from the mold was the first human. Each of the gods then wanted to create the second human without any cooperation, and a struggle broke out. During the confusion, the mold slipped from their hands and shattered on the ground. Each god blamed the others and departed in anger, leaving the human in the meeting chamber, alone but for the broken mold.

In their respective homes, each of the deities tried recreating the mold, but none of them could remember it exactly. Moradin made it too broad, while Corellon made it too thin and Yondalla made it too round. All of them, including Garl Glittergold, made their molds too short. Thus, the other races were born—dwarf and elf and halfling and gnome.

While the gods were making imperfect versions of their original creation, the human left in the meeting chamber struggled to rebuild the broken mold. Centuries later, that first human succeeded and created enough copies to extend humanity across the world. In this way, humans were the first of the gods' creations, yet the last to reach the world.

LEGENDS

Humanity may have conflicting myths, but its legends are consistent. Or, at least, each legend has the same consistent form. Some legends are specific to a certain region, while others can be found in every human settlement. Not every legend is positive—some tell of a hero failing a quest, or a man losing himself due to greed or laziness or some other fault. But most talk of great men and women who overcame hardships to protect their families and who earned a noble gift for the entire race.

Recounting legends is a popular pastime at night, when all the chores are done and the evening meal has been eaten. Children drift off to sleep to the sound of their parents recounting an old tale, and their dreams fill with images of those ancient heroes and heroines. This activity helps shape the children into adults who value such ideals as bravery, resourcefulness, loyalty, and hard work. Elders compete to see who can remember the most legends, and travelers share legends from other regions, bringing new tales to each location along the way. Most humans stop believing in the legends once they grow up; the tales become just stories told for amusement and education, rather than expressions of truth. But some adults still believe, and even go searching for evidence of those legendary figures from long ago.

Humanity's legends are too many to recount. Below are several examples, all of them widespread throughout the human community. Each of these legends describes a pivotal moment in human history and explains why the human race is different from other races.

Desh

The first men and women lived out under the sky, dancing through the meadows by day and collapsing on soft fields of heather at night. Then, one day when it began to rain, a woman said to the others, "I am tired of being wet. Is there not some way in which we can stay dry and warm, and continue to laugh and play?"

They looked around and thought. They saw nothing but heather and grass in their meadow. Then one of them said, "One day when we ran laughing across the valley, I found a place where tall trees grow. Surely their broad branches and outstretched leaves will shield us from the rain."

Everyone set out for these trees and soon found them clustered along one side of a wide valley. They ran beneath the trees, and the ground there was dry, for the rain could not pierce the thick foliage. Then the people laughed and danced again.

Now night began to fall, and one woman turned to the others. "I grow cold," she said. "Each day, as the sun caresses my skin, I am warm and comfortable. But when the sun sets and darkness covers the sky, I grow cold, and shiver there among the heather. Is there not some way we could stay warm throughout the night?"

They looked around and thought. At last one of the men answered. "One day, as we were playing, I hid myself within a wide bush to surprise everyone as they ran past. A cold wind was blowing, but once among its branches I felt it not, for the brambles shielded me. Perhaps we can each climb within a bush, and sleep sheltered by its thorns."

Everyone set out for the bushes and found them on the other side of the valley. Each selected a bush and climbed within it. The thick brambles blocked the wind, and they fell asleep.

The next morning, one of the women stated, "Last night, it is true, I was warm. But the brambles are sharp, and scratched my skin. Also, I miss the warmth of my mate, who would lie curled up against me when we slept in the heather. The bushes have not enough room for both of us together. Is there no way we can stay warm yet sleep together?"

They looked around and thought. After some time, one of the men replied, "Once, as we raced across the meadows, I spied a cave at the foot of a hill. Perhaps it is deep enough for several to sleep there together."

Everyone set out for the cave, which lay at the north edge of the valley. They found it large enough for two to sleep within it together. But its wide entrance would allow the wind to rush in.

"Perhaps," one of the women suggested, "a bush could be brought here, and set in the cave mouth, to block the wind from gaining entry."

This was done, and the woman and her mate slept in the cave that night. The next morning, they declared themselves warm and refreshed. Everyone wanted such a sleeping place, but the valley had no other caves.

"Setting the bush before the cave blocked the wind," a woman pointed out. "Could we not take four bushes and set them around a patch of heather, forming a place in which two mates could sleep safe from the wind?"

The men took four bushes and set them around a patch of heather in the center of the valley.

"That will keep the wind at bay," a woman agreed, "but the rain will still fall overhead. Could we not take branches and leaves from the trees and lay them atop the bushes, to keep the sleepers dry?"

The men did this, and the space was warm and dry and comfortable. Each other pair of mates wanted such a place to sleep within, and so more bushes and more branches were gathered, and more sleeping quarters formed in the valley. The bushes, having been uprooted, died, but their brambles still blocked the wind and cold. The leaves and branches, taken from their trees, also died, but still protected those beneath them from the rain.

Over time, the men learned to trim away most of the brambles, leaving a framework of bushes. Then they learned to strip bark from trees and wrap this around the framework, forming a solid wall against the wind. Next they discovered how to tie the branches and leaves on top, so that they would not fly away and would instead form a fixed roof. Finally, the men realized that they could drive the bushes into the ground, keeping them from shifting with strong winds, but could leave one section loose to slide open as a means of entry.

Each man and woman had a chamber of this sort, and they were set near each other on the valley floor, not far from a small stream. This became the first village, and the people named it Desh, which in the old tongue means "shelter."

The Horned Plague

All of humanity lived in Desh, along the valley floor. The village had grown, and the hunters needed to wander far afield to find enough food for everyone. One day the hunters were walking through a forest when they spied a massive stag, its antlers so wide that they swept the trees on either side. One of the hunters readied his spear, but his companion stopped him.

"Notice the stag's skin, silver as the water in moonlight," his friend pointed out. "This stag is no normal beast. Perhaps it is a god of the forest, or a god's beloved creature. Best we leave it to make its way unharmed, and find other game."

The first hunter, whose name was Sharak, shook off his friend's hand where it gripped his spear arm. "Our people go hungry," he replied, "That beast would feed many. And I desire the creature's silvery skin for a tunic." With that, he let fly his spear. Sharak's aim was true, and the stone spearpoint pierced the stag's breast and then its heart. The majestic creature leaped up, then fell dead to the forest floor.

Sharak and his companions skinned the stag and portioned out its meat to carry back to the village. But true warning Sharak's friend had given, for the stag had been the favorite of a god who dwelt nearby. The god, after seeing his beloved stag slain, called down a curse—all those who consumed the meat of the stag would be tainted by the violence of its death.

The next day, the villagers who partook of the meat became ill. They collapsed, and lay in their beds as if dead. Many of them did die. Others survived, but not unchanged, for they became darker, their features twisted, as if a corruption had spread throughout them and their very features bore its mark. The village elders, fearing this as a sign of an illness that threatened to spread throughout Desh, called to their people.

"We must escape this place," they cried. "This plague that does transform men into monsters ravages our people. Soon the entire village may be lost to it, and our families dead or changed beyond recognition. Gather your belongings, therefore, and we will set out for some place that has not this taint upon it."

The men and women of Desh gathered their goods together and, with many a tearful glance behind, fled the village of Desh. They climbed from the valley and wandered into the world. At every glen or riverbank that could provide some food and shelter, some of the people stopped and made their homes, so that humanity was no longer gathered all in one place, and could no longer present such an easy target for any god's displeasure.

Melana's Arrow

A woman named Melana was walking one day when she came upon a strange sight. There before her stood two men, both unlike any men she had known. One was as slight as a child, graceful of limb and face, with flowing hair, a smooth chin, and large eyes. The other was as stout as an oak, with a long beard and heavy brow, and small eyes gleaming like the moon. The two were arguing and seemed not to notice as she drew near.

"No true hunter could fail to use a bow," claimed the first, gesturing, and Melana saw that in his hands was a bow, tall as himself and beautifully carved. "Any other weapon is useless, and foolish is the creature who bears it."

"Stone is strong, and shatters all before it," the stout one replied, hefting a strangely shaped club. Melana could see that the weapon was made from stone, and carved into a handle at the bottom and a wide head at the top. "Wood breaks easily, and only a fool would consider it for a weapon."

Now close enough that she could have tossed her head and struck them upon their chins with her long braid,

Melana observed that these two strangers stood shorter than her by a head. This eased her fear, and she spoke to them.

"What manner of men are you," she asked, "and whither do you come? For surely were you from my village I would know you."

Both turned, astonished, and regarded her.

"And what village is this, that breeds women so tall and strong?" the slight one replied. "Surely I have never seen your like, though I have traveled this wood many times."

"Nor have I," the stout one agreed. "And I would remember, had I seen a lass so tall and slender, with hair so long and cheeks so smooth."

"Why do you argue so?" Melana asked them. "Are you rivals, determined each to be the better? You speak of stone and of bow, yet surely neither apart is as strong as the two together."

"Together?" the strangers scoffed. "Stone and bow cannot mix—what can you mean?"

Melana turned aside then, and, drawing her knife, cut a thin branch from a nearby tree. Quick strokes stripped its bark and notched its ends. Next she knelt and, locating a small shard of flint and a larger stone, she began striking the flint against the stone, shaping it. This she affixed to the branch, sliding it into one notch and fastening it there with vine. At the other end she added leaves lifted from the ground. Finished, she presented this to the strangers.

"Behold." She handed the item to the bowman. "Here is an arrow fit for your bow, yet crafted with a head of stone. Now, truly, stone and bow can work together, and both are the greater for it."

The strangers each studied the arrow in turn. Finally, they turned to one another.

"Indeed, she is correct," the bowman commented. "This arrow, with its head of stone, will pierce more deeply than my own wooden shafts, and survive the impact to fly again."

"And, propelled by your bow, it will strike farther than I can reach with my mace," the stouter one replied. "Clearly we are the both of us fools, to be arguing one side and the other, while this towering female beside us sees both sides together."

Turning then to Melana, the bowman addressed her. "Remian am I, from the land of the elves. I would know your name, mistress, who does see more clearly than I and can so easily settle such an old dispute."

"Norabun they call me," the stout one added. "Among the dwarves I am not without fame, yet your wisdom astounds me. Name yourself, that we may call you friend and thank you."

"I am Melana," she replied. "I know naught of elves and dwarves. My home lies there, beyond the hill, where humans gather in the village of Whylis. I would know more of you and your kind, and will gladly call you friend."

And thus humans met elves and dwarves, and the three races found themselves able to speak together and to agree upon several things. Yet always humans were at the center, for elves and dwarves rarely agreed, yet both found common ground with humans, and so humans were forced to bridge the gap between them.

Lakeem and the Lure of the Sea

A boy named Lakeem lived in the village of Sonelm. His father was a hunter, and had trained Lakeem in that profession. But the boy did not enjoy the bow and the spear, nor did he relish the death throes of deer and rabbit and boar. Instead, he loved to run through the forest, exulting as the wind lifted his long hair about him. Always Lakeem longed for more speed, to fly as the birds did high overhead, his feet never touching ground.

Lakeem's father was displeased with him. "If you will not hunt, you will not eat," he told the boy one day. "Go forth and find your own way, for I shall not support you."

Saddened, the boy gathered his clothes and his knife and set off. He ran through the forest, past the point where hunters turned back for home. On Lakeem ran, through the woods, until finally they thinned. Then he stopped, for the sight before him stole his breath away.

The woods ended, and beyond them lay a short stretch of land, grass covering much of it. Near its far edge the grass vanished, leaving only dirt of a strange shade, yellow like a new leaf. Beyond that lay the sight that had stopped Lakeem: There, past that yellow land, stretched a vast plain. It shimmered silver in the sunlight, much the way the stream near Sonelm glistened as it danced by. But this plain ran past the limit of Lakeem's vision, vanishing into the distance.

His heart pounding, the boy sped down the hill and toward this strange sight. The yellow ground, he discovered, was loose dirt, strangely dry, and clouds of it rose around him as his feet sped across it. Then he reached the edge.

As he had thought, the plain was water like the stream, except this water was blue as the night sky, and it went on forever. How could such a place exist, thought Lakeem. Is this the home of the stream, to which it returns every night? Is it perhaps the home of other streams as well, the way Sonelm houses my father and the others with their families?

Lakeem had often placed his feet in the cool stream near home, and now he did the same here. This water was warmer, and it stung his bare skin. Curious, he slid fully under the water, enjoying the sensation. Lakeem closed his eyes and felt himself rising as if carried upon the wind. His face broke through to air, and he looked about, watching as his body also rose to the surface. Thus he lay, as if upon a soft stretch of grass, the water gently stirring him against the strip of ground.

Finally, Lakeem pulled himself from the water and collapsed upon the ground. Exhausted, he slept, and in his dreams he flew not over air but across water.

The next morning, Lakeem walked along the water's edge, staring out across the endless expanse. After many hours, he noticed something moving along the water. It was brown against the blue, and finally he could see it was a tree branch, still bearing leaves.

I float upon the water, Lakeem thought. And that branch does as well. Surely, if I were to lean against the branch, we would both float, and then I could rest more comfortably as the water carried me along.

Retreating to the forest, he found a broad branch that had been torn loose in some past storm and now lay upon the ground. It stretched as long as Lakeem himself, and nearly as wide. One smaller limb rose from it at an angle, still bearing its broad canopy of leaves. This Lakeem dragged to the water and tossed in. It bobbed among the waves, and he leapt in himself, grabbing the branch and stretching his body along it. The branch floated and held him up as well. Lakeem wrestled for a better grip, turning the branch until its limb stood straight up. This he wrapped an arm around, the other trailing in the water.

Just then a wind blew across the water from the shore. The leaves on the branch caught the wind, and they bent forward but held. The branch leaped across the water, propelled forward like an arrow from a bow, and Lakeem felt his heart soar. He was flying at last, dancing across the waves, free as a bird!

Over time Lakeem learned to hollow out the branch, making for himself a channel in which to sit. A woven mat of leaves he hung upon a sturdy frame of branches, and set this above to catch the wind. By turning this frame, he could change his direction. By lowering it he could stop moving. And, with a smaller branch broken off from the original, he could dig against the water, pushing his craft elsewhere.

Years later, Lakeem returned to Sonelm. He arrived by sailing along a broad river, then walking across to the village, his boat carried upon his shoulders. The people there laughed to see him so, and cried out, "What, Lakeem, did you grow a shell to protect yourself in the world?"

Lakeem told them of the places he had been, and the sights he had seen. He brought to his mother strange stones, worn smooth by the sea and glittering like the moon. To his father he gave several large fish, their flesh succulent and sweet. He led his parents and the village elders to the river, and showed them how his boat sailed upon the water.

Then the people admired him, and his father clapped him upon the back. "Truly, you are no hunter," his father cried, "yet you have found your own way, and have returned to show our people." The villagers of Sonelm made boats under Lakeem's direction. Thus humans learned to sail the seas, and they became masters of the waves.

LANGUAGE

A culturally diverse race such as humans would naturally develop a multitude of languages—and in fact that's just what humans did in the real world.

But language barriers are even more of an obstacle at the gaming table than they are for a real-world traveler. A D&D game can quickly bog down when a PC resorts to extensive sign language and gestures to communicate with every NPC in town.

For this reason, most D&D worlds posit that all humans speak a single language—and it's one that most nonhumans know as well. Referred to as Common in D&D rulebooks, this "mother tongue" makes NPC interaction function more smoothly, and it emphasizes the central importance of humans in the affairs of the world. Humans are so ubiquitous that their language has become the default tongue—everyone knows at least a smattering of it.

Alternatively, you can assume a different origin for Common. Humans borrow technology, magical innovations, and cultural traditions, so it makes a certain amount of sense that they'd borrow language from older races as well. Rather than being a human "mother tongue" that other races learn because humans are so prevalent, Common could be a jumbled mixture of every other language. Nonhumans don't speak Common because it's convenient to do so. They speak Common because it shares many words with their native language and is easy to learn.

If the DM wants to introduce multiple human languages in the campaign, he can reduce the effectiveness of Common while retaining its prevalence. In such a world, almost everyone can speak Common, but the language is capable of expressing only basic concepts (hello, how much does that cost, hands up or I'll shoot). Anyone who wants to discuss matters in depth must use a more refined language, whether of human origin or not. Each human nation might have its own language, or nations could share the same language but have important cultural and political differences (much as the United States, Australia, and Great Britain do in the real world).

In a campaign where Common is eliminated completely, characters are forced to spend skill points on learning other languages. A world full of dozens of languages is more like the real world, but it's also more difficult for characters to make themselves understood. They may spend a good chunk of their time finding translators to help them navigate a foreign society. In this sort of campaign, spells such as *tongues* and *comprehend languages* become very important, as does judicious use of the Diplomacy skill when things threaten to get lost in translation.

GUTTERSPEAK

Much like the humans who speak it, Common is a language that changes with the times and displays a wide variety of dialects, slang, and pidgin variations. In the slums and ghettos of the largest cities, a debased form of Common has emerged that incorporates even more elements from different languages.

Known as Gutterspeak, this dialect makes extensive use of slang and made-up words. Gutterspeak is the language of the streets, and the upper class frowns on its use. Using Gutterspeak in high society is appallingly rude and a sure sign of low breeding.

Travelers to any human city will hear Gutterspeak, but the language is much rarer outside large metropolitan areas, since most rural areas have their own regional dialects. Gutterspeak is constantly changing, and the idioms, curses, and slang that comprise Gutterspeak in one city might be unheard of in a city far away.

Although a variant of Common, Gutterspeak has no written version of its own. Some storytellers try to recreate this earthy, slang-ridden language in their own works, typically producing a hard-to-read doggerel.

GUTTERSPEAK PHRASEBOOK

The following Gutterspeak phrases may come up at the gaming table with some regularity. Characters from urban, lower-class areas are more likely to use these phrases than those with more education. To capture the feel of Gutterspeak at the game table, use the following terms (or their English translations) and invent your own Gutterspeak words and phrases.

Like tahh on a kesir. "Like tusks on an elf." A statement that indicates that something is ill-fitting or inappropriate.

Choor! A general swear word derived from Orc, used to describe something unpleasant. It is commonly used as an expletive or in its adjectival form, *choory*.

Ravan. A shortened form of the Elven word for friend (*ravanthas*), used as a casual term for a comrade, friend, or associate.

He nothin' but a babblestunt. A derogative term describing an overly gregarious halfling or gnome, but also used for anyone who talks incessantly about nothing important.

Kessukoofah can't play lessen' he jingles. Roughly: "The fool isn't welcome unless he has money." *Kessukoofah* is a bastardization of Gnome and Elven terms, both of which mean "fool" or "stupid."

Matta' neh standin' eh puddles when alush tasa. "It doesn't matter whether it's raining when you're standing in puddles." A mishmash of Elven and Orc, this is a typical lament of the poor and downtrodden, meaning that a situation can't get much worse when you're already as low as you can be.

Time a kerym oror ya ravan krun. "Sometimes a knife is your best friend." A phrase using the Elven word for knife or sword (*kerym*) and the Orc word for best or most (*krun*).

Nash him to the squeaks, mernar! "Feed him to the rats, comrades!" An obvious statement that utilizes an unlikely blend of Common, the Orc word for eating or feasting (*nash*), and the Dwarven word for comrade or friend (*mernar*).

CITIES AND SETTLEMENTS

Humans are a remarkably adaptable race that can survive almost insurmountable odds. They can survive in nearly any climate, although they prefer warmer and drier climates. Humans' drive and ambition leads them to establish settlements in even the most unlikely locations, as long as those places have adequate food and water. Expansionist by nature, humans crave new territory, which often results in clashes with other races over prime samples of land.

HUMAN EXPANSION

Just as individual members of other races are alternately amused by and frustrated with the behavior of individual humans, so too do nonhuman cultures find themselves at odds with the human societies that border and sometimes envelop them. When the other races use one word to describe humanity, they often say "plague," "horde," or "swarm." Even if they're being particularly diplomatic, elves and dwarves refer to human societies as "everpresent" or "busy."

That is, after all, one of humanity's strongest traits—human societies can be found everywhere. Harsh climates, remote locations, and fierce locals are seen as challenges, not barriers. It's difficult to imagine a place so forsaken that no humans would ever attempt to settle it. Not every settlement succeeds, of course, but one failure only means that the next human settlers to lay claim to an area are more determined and better prepared. As the elves say, "Once the first humans gain a foothold, we must coexist or retreat, because the humans never relinquish the ground they've seized."

Humans regard ambitious expansion as proof of their tenacity and worthiness. A human societt rarely gives up on an objective; it either attains the goal or falls apart trying. An individual human might quit a task and walk away, but human societies are always moving forward, looking for new places to conquer, new areas to settle, new industries to develop. Once a human society embarks on a crusade, it often takes a revolution or some other calamity to end that effort prior to victory.

The high birth rate of humans also fuels the race's expansion. It's not uncommon for human families to raise four to eight children, each of whom will have families of their own. That means the parents are always looking for

ways to make more money, settle more land, and otherwise provide more support for their growing children. The drive to provide for one's offspring is particularly powerful in humans, combining their future focus with their natural ambition.

That drive is why human societies seem so busy to nonhumans. Humans are never satisfied, constantly striving to improve upon what they have already accomplished. Humans rarely leave land alone. They cultivate and harvest it, putting the land to work for their goals. Humans build their houses only to rebuild them later, making them larger and stronger with each iteration.

The human obsession with expansion plays into the arrogance that comes with ambition and adaptability. If nonhumans tell humans they can't settle somewhere, you can count on a village springing up in that location almost overnight. Human pioneers travel to places other races shy away from, finding ways to draw sustenance and wealth from terrain that others say is worthless.

If a region can support a human village, it probably has one. As a result, humans can find their own kind no matter where they go, and they are more likely to get help and information from these other humans than from members of any other race. If an area doesn't have any human settlers, it's probably because the place hasn't been discovered yet, some menace has killed every human who approached, or a nearby human society has agreed not to settle there in return for some other consideration.

Adventure Seed: Whenever adventurers find a place where humans could live but do not, they should wonder why. The reason might be obvious: fire rains from the sky, orc hordes raze the area regularly, or a virulent disease infects all humans who go there. The reason for the absence of humans might be mysterious ("Nobody ever comes back from there"), vague ("The place is haunted by evil"), or fictitious ("The elves say that powerful magic turns every trespasser into a toad").

Roleplaying Application: Give some thought to what kind of community you grew up in. If you're playing a barbarian, druid, ranger, or wizard, your choices are somewhat constrained. Human barbarians live beyond civilized society (that's what makes them barbarians, after all), and druids and rangers often live on the frontier between human civilization and the wilderness. Wizards tend to come from towns and cities with the colleges and high-level mentors that possess arcane knowledge.

But even with those provisions, your home community can be nearly anywhere.

SETTLING THE FRONTIER

When humans consider pioneering a new community, the first question they ask is one of usefulness. What does this location have to offer? Arable land and terrain with extractable commodities such as timber and iron is obviously useful to the settler, but other locations are also ripe for human settlement. Humans are smart enough traders to value the convenience of a location where two rivers meet or two roads cross. For groups such as mysterious cults and esoteric wizard schools, the remoteness of some locations is why they're useful. Some humans, for reasons fair or foul, just want to be left alone.

The second concern for human pioneers is essential resources. Does the location have access to fresh water? Is a food source somewhere nearby, whether game or fish or fruit or grain? Are building materials near at hand? Humans won't drag stones and logs across a valley if they can build homes near the quarry and the logging camp instead.

The third question is one of defense. Not every human wages war, but settlers know the dangers of the world and seek ways to minimize the risk to their families. Can enemies spy on the settlement from a distance, or do the human sentries have a commanding view of the area around? Can the settlement be attacked from all sides or easily surrounded, or is there only one good way in? Can the inhabitants flee if necessary, escaping into the woods or along the river?

Finally, a decision about a settlement must consider size. A location might be ideal for the three families now settling there, but will it remain so? If two more human families arrive and settle nearby, can the place accommodate them as well, or will it become too crowded? How big do the founders hope the settlement will get?

Humans almost never consider a location too big to be settled. If the first wave of pioneers can't work all the land, later settlers and the children of the original pioneers will take charge of the remaining land.

Adventure Seed: Would-be pioneers hire the adventurers to scout a region of frontier and find the best spot to build a new settlement. In addition to dealing with marauding monsters and the hazards of the wilderness, the PCs will have to think like settlers and assess each location's advantages and drawbacks. Some sites have hidden dangers, while others may be claimed (fairly or not) by rival groups of settlers.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Once they select a location, humans set to work. They organize the process of settlement, assigning tasks to people according to their skills. Some fell trees or quarry rocks for building materials. Others clear obstructions to make room for houses. Still others mark out where each building will stand, leaving room for streets in between. The pioneers assemble rudimentary houses quickly enough for their families to take shelter as soon as possible.

As soon as humans have basic shelter, they begin working the land in whatever fashion is appropriate. Settlers on an arable prairie will clear the land of brush and plow the

soil, while a logging camp will start felling and sawing up trees. Only when the "business end" of a settlement is fully functional will humans build themselves more luxurious quarters and more elaborate defenses.

HUMAN ARCHITECTURE

Human structures almost always sit above ground, and they are constructed rather than grown or carved. Thus, human buildings are fundamentally different from the habitations of dwarves, gnomes, and elves. Humans like to live on the surface of the world, setting their feet on the ground but gazing at the sky overhead. They also like to fashion their homes from the ground up, assembling materials into floor, walls, and roof. Human settlements jut from the earth and don't blend in with the landscape, particularly in areas where the humans have cut down trees and hacked stone from mountainsides to build their houses.

Much to the consternation of druids and others who revere unspoiled wilderness, the area around a human settlement shows damage from human "progress." Humans accept this damage as a necessary consequence of their go-anywhere, build-anything attitude. Humans do not need to spend time finding the perfect cave or the right mountain valley. They find an adequate cave or valley, then start altering it to suit their needs.

VISITING A HUMAN SETTLEMENT

Human communities are usually more cosmopolitan and welcoming than the communities of other races. In a human city, visitors can buy nearly everything from the everpresent human merchants, including items that might be illegal or that hail from far away. Travelers of all sorts walk the streets, and strange sights and smells abound. Other races may trade with foreigners, but they prefer to do so outside their cities or in a single designated area. Humans have fewer compunctions about strangers, and more interest in distant lands—after all, their fellow humans are often strangers from faraway places. As long as a human community's visitors follow the rules, they're generally welcome (as long as they aren't obviously evil or dangerous). Goblinoids probably can't set foot inside a dwarven redoubt or an elf treetop village unless they're invading the place, but many human settlements tolerate a goblinoid presence as long as the goblinoids obey the law.

Even in smaller settlements, humans display this attitude of worldliness. Dwarf towns and elf villages are wary of strangers and often attack those who enter uninvited. Human villagers are curious about the world, and they welcome anyone who has traveled it, provided they sense no threat. Strangers bearing news are welcome, and crafts from distant lands eagerly received. Perhaps humans are more welcoming because they're such a young race, or because they live their lives on open ground and beneath an open sky. Unless he's obviously dangerous, a stranger visiting a small town is big news—and good news. Everyone wants to know who the newcomer is, where he hails from, and what he brought to sell or barter.

HUMAN ECONOMIES

Humans thrive upon trade, and, unlike other races, they appreciate money for its own sake. While a gnome might regard a pile of coins as means to an end—an end that often involves a large gem—a human sees the pile of coins as the end itself. The accumulation of monetary wealth for its own sake is a manifestation of humans' future-focused nature. Humans appreciate money not for what it buys, but for what it might buy in the future, were the possessor of the money so inclined. Knowing that one's wealth is sufficient to make a particular purchase gives a human as much satisfaction as the purchase itself.

Humans are excellent traders because they wander across the world, adapt quickly to new cultures, and have relatively sophisticated financial instruments. Gnomes and half-elves are sometimes better bargainers, but humans have more practice dealing with foreigners, assessing unfamiliar items, and putting buyers and sellers together.

Humans also have a mercenary attitude toward money-related misfortunes. Human merchants look for the best deals possible, and while most will not cheat someone openly, they happily take advantage of another human's naivete or ignorance.

A human tricked out of his money by a sly merchant is angry when he finds out about it, but the anger is tempered with a grudging respect for the merchant's skill at deceiving him. Most humans would ruefully admit that if the situations had been reversed, they would have taken advantage in the same way.

EXAMPLE CITY: THREE FALLS

Set where three rivers spill over a short cliff into a large lake, the city of Three Falls has become a center of commerce. Travelers sail down the rivers on keelboats, buy and sell their goods, then either boat back up whence they came, transfer to a different river, or trade with communities farther west on the shore of Silverfoam Lake.

Three Rivers is a thriving city of twenty thousand. It has become the trading center for its region; everyone who can afford the trip boats to the city to sell their goods, instead of accepting a lower price somewhere else.

A free city, Three Rivers has its own shipyard, its own government, and a small army to protect it from the hobgoblins and worg-riding goblins that live in the surrounding woods. Spellcasters flock to Three Rivers because it has a well-regarded school of magic where several master wizards provide instruction to novices. Druids search the nearby forests for herbs, and rangers hunt at the forest edge (with

either game or goblinoids as their quarry). Bards frequent the city's taverns, learning new tales from those who have traveled the area and singing songs for money and lodging. Street performers delight visitors—and steal from the unwary.

Most of Three Falls stands above the falls, arrayed on the two spits of land between the rivers, and on the banks of the two outer rivers as well. Each stretch of land is referred to as a pier, with First Pier being the north shore of the northernmost river and Fourth Pier the south shore of the southernmost.

Strong stone walls surround the two outer piers, separating them from the forests that lurk just beyond bowshot on either side. Iron-and-wood bridges, wide enough to drive a wagon across, connect the piers to one another. Rope-and-pulley systems raise and lower wooden platforms from First and Fourth Piers to the surface of Silverfoam Lake at the bottom of the falls. The city's residents have cut stairways into the cliffsides, for the convenience of anyone unwilling to chance using the platforms.

What's on Each Pier: The shipyards run along First Pier, as do fish markets and much of the city's transient housing (occupied by sailors on shore leave).

Most trade and commerce occurs on Second Pier, the site of the original trading post. Schools and shops cover Third Pier, while Fourth Pier is mostly permenent residences. Additional homes stretch along both sides of the lake, along with hotels and taverns. The newer residents live down on the lakeshore, and visitors stay here unless they can afford the pricier rooms up above. Because those neighborhoods don't have the protection of walls, living there is more dangerous than elsewhere in the city.

City Government

Almost everything can be found in Three Falls except for royalty. The town does not lie within any kingdom, so it owes loyalty to no one but its own citizens. Its status as a free city is another reason some visitors prefer it to other locales. As long as a visitor abides by the city's laws and causes no trouble, he is free to pursue his interests, no matter what his religion, race, or occupation.

Retired merchants comprise most of the city council, and their only interest is in maintaining the status quo. They want to bequeath an independent, thriving city to their successors, so they'll listen keenly to information about threats to Three Falls. But they're unwilling to involve Three Falls in the affairs of the larger world, and they won't undertake decisive but risky efforts (such as dislodging the goblinoids from the surrounding forest). The council mostly takes an advisory role, choosing one of its number to take the post of mayor and handle the day-to-day administration of the city.

Three Falls stays free of outside domination and inward disorder thanks to its well-trained militia, which numbers more than two thousand troops. In a citywide emergency, Three Falls can call on security details from the major

merchant houses and rough-and-tumble sailors from the less reputable ships in the harbor. Those forces together can add nearly a thousand soldiers to the defense of the city.

Three Falls History

A pair of brothers, Chad and Thom Tetherlee, and their partner Willem Olander, founded Three Falls. The three men were traders themselves, but had grown tired of constant travel and wanted to open a trading post. They had sailed up one of the rivers before, and now came down a second one. The location made sense, and they set to work, constructing a crude log cabin between two of the rivers. But the real key to their plan was the rope bridges the men stretched across each of the three rivers, so that traders could reach the cabin no matter which bank they landed upon. The trading post became an instant success, and within the year the three men were married and building houses behind the post itself. A hunter settled there next, arranging to give the trading post a deal on the food he caught in return for land for his own home. Then came a man and his two sons, who built and repaired boats. And the town continued to grow.

Soon the growing settlement came into contact—and conflict—with a hobgoblin tribe that had always caught fish from the rivers just above the falls. The humans drove off the hobgoblins, but the hobgoblins still regard the clifftops as rightfully theirs, and they periodically attack the city or menace the keelboat traffic along one of the rivers.

Three Falls Locations

The following places are well known to all the city's residents, and any of them can provide directions to visitors trying to get from one location to another.

The Old Post: The original trading post still exists, two blocks from the falls in the center of Second Pier. This small, plain stone building has become a popular bar, where merchants often discuss business over ale. Travelers looking to sell goods often head to the Old Post first and announce what they have before sitting at a table—interested parties then approach them to discuss terms.

Adventurers often use the Old Post as a convenient meeting place, because it's easy to get to and everyone knows where it is. It also functions as an impromptu "hiring hall" for patrons who need specialized labor (adventurers, in other words).

City Hall: This large, impressive stone building sits along the edge of Third Pier, looking out over the falls. The city council meets here, and the mayor's offices occupy much of the second floor. Anyone arrested by the town guard is brought to City Hall for trial and sentencing.

Trials are typically fair if somewhat rushed; Three Falls courts deal with so many disputes among merchants that criminal matters get shunted aside unless they're particularly notorious or spectacular.

Stockade ("The Quiet"): Just behind City Hall is a long, low stone building. This is the Stockade, the city jail and home of the town guard. A barracks is located in the back of the building, while the front has jail cells and the captain's office. Residents consider themselves lucky if they never see the inside of this building.

Three Falls residents refer to the stockade as "the quiet" because its walls are reputedly so thick that it's the only place in the city where you can't hear the dull roar of the waterfalls. A city resident might complain, "The watch caught me being drunk and disorderly in Fourth Pier, so I had to spend three days in the quiet."

Wizards' Tower: A tall, square stone tower near the far end of Third Pier is home to the local wizards guild, and also its school. Would-be wizards travel to Three Falls seeking training, but the tower's leadership accepts only a handful as students.

Some city residents worry about having marginally trained student wizards in their midst. Others point out that the school provides an excellent defense against anything sailing down the river, and that it is far better to have wizards on your side than against you.

The tower is more than a place of learning. As with most institutions in Three Falls, the wizards' tower takes an active hand in commercial activity. Spellbooks, rare spell components, potions, and scrolls are all available for purchase at the tower (with an 80% chance of any item worth 500 gp or less being available).

Shipyards: The shipyards (and ancillary shops that braid rope and sew sails) cover much of First Pier. Everyone in the region knows that Three Falls produces the best boats, and merchants buy or lease their ships here. Workshops on the clifftops build the ship's parts, which are then lowered to the docks on the pulley platforms for final assembly.

Sailors gather in the Rusty Anchor tavern alongside the shipyards, some hoping to join the crew of a merchant keelboat and others drinking up their share of the profits from a merchant voyage.

First Pier is a rough-and-tumble neighborhood with its share of street crime. The biggest dangers for unwary visitors are the press gangs that roam the shipyard streets and alleyways at night. After subduing unlucky passersby with saps and clubs, the gangs deliver unconscious victims

to ships docked below the falls. By the time the victims wake up, they're in the middle of Silverfoam Lake on their way to a far-off land—having involuntarily joined the crew of a ship.

Foaming Tankard: The most popular inn downside, as the area along the lake is called, is the Foaming Tankard. This large, comfortable tavern provides clean rooms, good ale, good food, and the latest gossip from up and down the rivers. Bards make this their first stop upon arrival and vie for the right to play an evening in the taproom.

Free Market: Established merchants and craftsfolk have shops and warehouses, but many vendors cannot afford such places, or they make such infrequent visits that it is not worth buying a shop. Instead, they gather in the Free Market, a large open-air bazaar in Second Pier east of the Old Post. Here anyone can claim a space and spread a blanket on the ground, or erect a wooden stand, and show his wares. The town guards insist that vendors leave room to walk between displays and make sure no trouble occurs. Anyone who obeys these rules can sell freely here.

Someone who does well at the Free Market might wind up buying or renting a permanent stand along the edge of the market. The stands cost more—not just in rent but because the city assesses taxes on those who sell from fixed structures. Despite the extra cost, the permanent stands are a good deal because customers can more easily find a merchant with a specific location amid the tumult of the market.

Items worth up to 300 gp are generally available at the Free Market, but it takes a DC 20 Gather Information to find someone to buy or sell the exact item you're interested in.

Three Falls Personalities

The following denizens of the city are likely contacts and patrons for adventurers who use Three Falls as a home base.

Master Nathan Olander: The Tetherlee and Olander families are still the city's leading citizens, both because their ancestors founded Three Falls and because the families often produce hard-working, charismatic people. The current Master Olander (male human aristocrat 10) is no exception. He is serving his third term as the city's mayor and chief magistrate. The mayor is well liked by visitors and residents alike because he has a reputation as someone who can cut through red tape and mediate a thorny dispute.

Olander's family is rich and still owns several valuable spots in the city, but the mayor shows no interest in increasing that wealth. Instead, Olander's focus is on keeping Three Falls clean and safe, its citizens happy and prosperous. He is openly dismissive of the threat posed by the goblinoids in the forests. While Olander occasionally worries about the hobgoblins, he realizes the importance of maintaining the citizens' confidence in the city administration, so he makes a show of being unconcerned with hobgoblin raids or similar threats.

Alastair Lim: Jonathan Lim and his sons Van and Ben founded the shipyards after they got permission from the Tetherlee brothers and Willem Olander to settle near their trading post. Since then, the shipyards have grown to cover most of First Pier and have become one of the city's most successful industries. Alastair Lim (male human expert 10) owns and operates the largest shipbuilding company in the city, Lim Yards, and is the de facto master of the shipyards in general.

Lim has no official authority over his peers, but when he gives a command, they obey. Perhaps this is because his family founded the shipyards. Perhaps it is because his business is still the largest and most successful. Or it may be because Lim, a big, burly man with massive scarred hands and a thick black beard, could crush any of them as easily as he pounds nails into planks.

News of any venture involving waterborne travel into or out of Three Falls eventually reaches Lim's desk, so he often hires freelance adventurers to tackle problems such as piracy on the western shores of the lake or banditry farther up one of the rivers.

Geryn and Molly Banon: This cheerful couple owns and runs the Foaming Tankard. Both are friendly, considerate of their guests, and protective of their patrons. Geryn (male human expert 3) is a tall, lanky man with a slow smile and a dry wit, while his wife Molly (female human expert 3) is short and round, and loves to laugh.

Two aspects of the city the Banons have little patience for is the red tape of City Hall and the Stockade (where Molly served a few short sentences as a younger girl). If the PCs need a safe refuge from the city watch, Geryn and Molly will happily provide it.

Lissandra: Two decades ago, a tall, slender woman with snow-white hair arrived in Twin Falls and made her way to the wizards' tower. She was admitted immediately and became one of the instructors. Since then, Lissandra (female human wizard 13) has become the mistress of the tower and head of the local guild. She rarely exits the tower except to buy food at the market, and though she is always polite, her quiet tone and piercing green eyes terrify people. Those who have trained under her say that she is a wizard of great power, and a demanding but fair instructor.

Captain Tonalsin: Oleg Tonalsin (male human fighter 12) is the captain of the town guard. He has held this post for four years, and will most likely keep it until he is too old to wear a sword. Everyone likes Tonalsin—a tall, broad-shouldered man with a thick brown beard and hair to match, he is quiet but pleasant, and prefers talking to fighting. This does not mean he cannot fight, as drunks and villains can attest, but he always tries to settle disputes peacefully first.

Unlike the rest of the city's leadership, Tonalsin is openly worried about the goblins and hobgoblins in the

surrounding forest. Some rangers have reported seeing larger groups of goblinoids at the forest edge, which might mean the hobgoblins are preparing to sack Three Rivers and reclaim the clifftops for themselves.

CREATING HUMAN CHARACTERS

Humans get no bonuses to their ability scores, no special qualities such as darkvision, and no other special abilities. But they're still one of the most popular races to play because they begin play with a free feat and 4 more skill points than those of other races, and they get an extra 1 skill point every level after that. In addition, their versatility means that humans can choose any class as their favored class. Humans also have the advantage that, being so ubiquitous, their presence is accepted (or at least tolerated) almost anywhere, thus lessening any initial racial stigmas.

SPECIAL HUMAN OPTIONS

As a human character, you qualify for some human-specific feats and prestige classes unavailable to PCs of other races, all described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this book.

Feats: Able Learner, Fearless Destiny, Heroic Destiny, Protected Destiny.

Prestige Classes: Chameleon, urban soul.

HUMANS AS CHARACTERS

Humans are the ultimate generalists. They don't have a specific favored class, and none of their ability scores are penalized.

Bard: Bards are common among human cultures with a rich oral tradition, but since music and storytelling are part of every culture, they can be found almost anywhere. Human bards excel at greasing the wheels in social situations and make excellent negotiators and arbiters when dealing with other races. Human bards tend to be accomplished travelers and true multiculturalists, comfortable in a number of human and nonhuman societies.

Barbarian: Human barbarians wander some of the most far-flung reaches of the world. Cut off from the rest of civilization, these hardy individuals live by sheer tenacity and strength. Depending on their relationship with other neighboring races, barbarians may be either more open-minded (respecting any race that is tough enough to survive) or extremely xenophobic and suspicious of strangers. Unlike barbarians of other races who frequently reject civilization, human barbarians often display a childlike fascination for the trappings of civilization, such as tall buildings, refined entertainments, and the sheer number of people crowded into the typical human city.

Cleric: Considering the zeal with which humans revere their deities, clerics are common. Human clerics worship the entire gamut of deities, from the benevolent to the vile. Clerics serve as the backbone of any community, tending to their flocks with faith and wisdom as their tools.

Druid: Humans are sometimes drawn to the power and majesty of raw nature, learning its secrets and protecting it from harm. Some gain grudging respect from elves and other forest dwellers due to their commitment to the natural world. Many human druids are rebels against their own race, trying to undo the encroachment of other humans into pristine wilderness.

Fighter: From the dashing knight to the stalwart man-at-arms, human fighters are both common and respected. Thanks to their extra feat at 1st level, human fighters know more "tricks" than fighters of other races, and they play up that advantage on the battlefield. Many fighters learned the rudiments of combat in a national army or local militia.

Monk: The sheer variety of human cultures is fertile soil for the esoteric mental and physical disciplines that are a monk's bread and butter. The extra feat gained at 1st level helps a human monk create her own "style" of martial arts.

Paladin: The human paladin channels her ambition and aggression into a drive to undertake dangerous quests and protect the helpless from the evil. Most human paladins worship Heironeous or St. Cuthbert.

Ranger: Stealthy scouts and determined hunters, human rangers stalk the wilderness. More comfortable away from others, rangers may look down on their city-dwelling kin and revere those races that live a natural lifestyle. Rangers are often happiest on the frontier, where they can ply their skills on behalf of civilization without having to live in it. A human ranger is always moving forward, pushing against the edges of the map and finding new lands for others to settle.

Rogue: While not as inherently stealthy or nimble as rogues of some other races, human rogues enjoy additional skill points that prove invaluable. Some human rogues remain generalists, while others choose a specialty on which to focus—picking pockets, second-story work, or glib con artist, for example. Such rogues are particularly at home in the large cities and metropolises where many humans live.

Sorcerer: Humans were the first to claim that sorcerers have draconic blood flowing in their veins. Charismatic and flashy, human sorcerers often consider themselves better than those around them, regardless of race, class, or social status.

Wizard: Despite their youth as a race and their individually short life spans, humans make good wizards through determination, tenacity, and devotion. Because of their additional feat, human wizards can quickly concentrate on some aspect of magic, making it truly their own. Because wizards typically have high Intelligence scores, a human wizard will often have a truly prodigious number of skill points to spend.

HALF-ELVES AND HALF-ORCS

Illus. by C. Lakkacs

In the D&D world, both half-elves and half-orcs stretch the normal definitions of race. Neither has its own unique culture, instead straddling two disparate societies. Half-elves and half-orcs react to their dual heritage in different ways. Half-elves try to achieve a balance between their elf blood and their human blood, but half-orcs reject both orcs and humans—often because orcs and humans reject them. A half-elf expends a great deal of effort trying to fit in despite her hybrid nature. A half-orc expends just as much effort making his own way in the world and keeping society at arm's length.

Half-elves and half-orcs rarely live in homogeneous communities of their brethren. A few live among elves or orcs, respectively, but more often they live among humans, either as a racial minority or in a community of similar mixed-blood outcasts. They rarely feel at home among humans, because the elf or orc blood running through their veins can never be completely denied. Even a half-elf or half-orc raised among humans from birth has an outlook on life colored by his or her racial heritage.

Races of Destiny focuses on how these two hybrid races interact with their human side, especially for half-elves and half-orcs who grew up in a human society. This chapter describes how half-elves and half-orcs compare to and contrast with the rest of humanity

Half-elves stand with one foot in each of two cultures: an elf society rich with history and tradition, and a human society vibrant and everchanging. Over time, half-elves become adept at shifting gears and reconciling the two halves of their heritage.

Half-orcs, on the other, are reviled and despised by orcs (who think they're too weak) and humans (who think they they're too brutish). These creatures are the butt of jokes, the target of insults, and the subject of frequent discrimination and senseless attacks. And all the negative attention is because of something the half-orc can't change: his heritage.

Despite this obstacle, half-orcs survive. Many people assume that only a handful of half-orcs exist, but in fact a large number of them roam the world, searching in vain for a place that accepts them for who they are, rather than hating them for their basic nature.

THE HALF-ELF: A DAY IN THE LIFE

Guild advisor Tal Remar was already awake when the morning passed through the intricate latticework screen that blocked his view of the provincial capital. As he dressed, the young regent read the various reports that scattered his desk. Barbarians were raiding caravans to the far east, and the insipid chamberlain was again demanding that taxes be lowered in three territories.

He casually scooped up a healthy portion of exquisite fruit that overflowed from the bowl that sat on the desk. He ignored the human serving girl who quietly came out of the dark corner in which she was standing and cleaned up the mess that he left behind. Time to meet with his uncle, a representative from the elf nations.

After sitting through an hour of rigorously polite greetings and another hour of his uncle's assessment of the current diplomatic crisis, Tal Remar finally had a chance to speak. "It seems to me, honored uncle, that you're expecting the humans to exhibit more patience than they've shown," Tal said. "You can wait decades to get the answer you want from the king, but your human counterparts will be dead and gone before that happens. That's why you think they're pressing the issue. They just want it resolved before they reach their dotage."

Tal and his uncle spoke for another hour, sharing anecdotes about the madcap speed of human affairs, then the elf departed to his embassy while Tal returned to his office. Turning to his service girl, he exclaimed, "Why does diplomacy always take so long? I spent the whole morning in a conversation that could have taken five minutes!"

The serving girl shrugged as Tal said, "How frustrating. Perhaps the gentlemen's dueling club will provide more fast-paced diversions this afternoon."

HALF-ELF PSYCHOLOGY

Central to half-elf psychology is the drive to bring disparate characteristics together. Half-elves are natural uniters and mediators. The desire for synthesis and unity is strong in a half-elf, whether he is trying to broker an agreement with a bitter rival or attempting to reconcile his elf and human heritages.

AGE CONFUSION IN CHILDHOOD

Half-elves lead difficult childhoods, regardless of whom they were raised with. A half-elf brought up among humans ages both physically and emotionally slower than his peers. While he may appear to be mature in body, a "teenage" half-elf may still retain the worldview of a much younger child.

That difference puts his parents or other caregivers in a dilemma: With whom does a half-elf child play and learn? If placed with his chronological peers, he'll be the smallest and most immature among them—and the gap will grow wider with each passing year. On the other hand, raising a half-elf child with his developmental peers means an achingly slow trip through childhood. From the half-elf's perspective, human friend after human friend matures quickly while the half-elf remains stuck in place. For one or the other of these reasons, a half-elf child often withdraws from the world, seeking solitude where he can.

QUIET EXTERIOR, INNER TURMOIL

Once a half-elf survives his lengthy childhood and adolescence, he emerges much more serene and poised than those of many other races—at least on the surface. Half-elves move with a fluid grace and have an intuitive knack for seeing the beauty in the everyday world. Like elves, half-elves tend to be patient and take a long-term view of the future. They are relatively unruffled by minor setbacks, realizing that such difficulties mean little in the long run. Half-elves show more of an interest in song, poetry, and art than most humans. In a community that respects bards, artists, or musicians, this affinity can be a half-elf's ticket to social acceptance.

But in the half-elf's heart and mind, it's a different story. Human ambition and adaptability is in a constant tug-of-war with the elf's patience and reverence for tradition. A half-elf truly reaches adulthood when he comes to some sort of accommodation with both halves of his nature. And when that happens, the half-elf starts looking for other things to mend, synthesize, and reunite.

THE FOREIGNER MENTALITY

To a human observer, the typical half-elf retains the aloofness elves are known for. As a result, many humans consider half-elves to be almost as haughty as elves. Some half-elves who live among humans try to refute this attitude by taking pains to demonstrate how laid back and approachable they are. Those half-elves who succeed in making humans comfortable in their presence find that their eloquence helps them make their way in society.

Half-elves have a hard time convincing elves to treat them with respect. Most elves regard half-elves as stocky, clumsy, and lacking in the nuance and subtlety that elves prize. Unless he is unusually bright and observant, a half-elf always seems a little slower than usual among elves and may be treated as slightly inferior. If tensions are high between elves and humans, half-elves are often treated even worse, sometimes seen as tainted or cursed.

Because of their mixed heritage, half-elves never truly feel as though they belong to one race or the other. Among both humans and elves, the half-elf adopts the persona of the courteous foreigner: He speaks your language and wants to respectfully partake of your customs. He's knowledgeable and fascinating, but you're unlikely to forget that he's from somewhere else.

This foreigner mentality means that few half-elves are shocked when they encounter a new and unusual culture. Those half-elves who embrace civilization become true cosmopolitans, sampling everything that life has to offer. Their human blood gives them a zest for life, while their elf side lets them appreciate it all the more.

THE HALF-ELF LIFE

Faced with trying to reconcile their presence in two societies that don't quite mesh, half-elves sometimes adopt more than a foreigner's mentality. They adopt a foreigner's lifestyle, wandering between places where either they can hide their lineage in anonymity or where an individual's heritage doesn't matter as much as it does in other locales.

Half-elves generally adopt a middle position between the energetic lifestyle of humans and the languid way of life of the elves. Doing this is another way the half-elf reconciles his dual nature, but this compromising posture also sets him apart from the lifestyle and the outlook of both his parents.

Half-elf craftwork takes a back seat to no other race

LEISURE

Thanks to their long life span (compared to that of humans), half-elves have the freedom to experiment with countless forms of amusement over the years. Most turn to the arts to find comfort, and in so doing they become collectors of fine works, creating magnificent exhibitions that combine multiple media from different cultures.

Like elves, half-elves tend to focus intently on one discipline and adhere to it or follow it exceedingly well. A half-elf who collects rare porcelain, for example, will not be content until he can find every single piece manufactured by a particular famous crafter. Wandering half-elves are content to collect ephemeral objects, such as poems, songs, and works of music—items that can be carried along anywhere.

Half-elves also share the elves' willingness to devote years to a topic just to see if they are suited for it. A human might blanch at the prospect of spending five years training to be a painter, then deciding against the effort and putting down the paintbrush forever. But half-elves have longer life spans and thus are inclined to spend more time pursuing such diversions.

Half-elves enjoy many of the same entertainment forms that humans do. They like carousing and gambling, but they find the pleasures of such diversions all too fleeting. Half-elves also get a great deal of pleasure from the same leisure pursuits that elves enjoy, as long as they can muster the patience for the leisurely pace and esoteric manner that elves bring to their playing of games and their performance of dramas and songs. Half-elves raised by elves are particularly fond of elven amusements, and they long for the elegance and beauty of elven leisure activities once they've been confronted with the harsh ugliness that occurs outside their home realms.

Half-elves shy away from the blood sports that members of human cultures participate in, especially those that involve animals, such as bear baiting, cockfighting, and dog fights. Most even find sport hunting to be distasteful, seeing it as disrespectful of the natural order of things and a waste of precious resources. (Hunting for the sake of subsistence or survival is part of the natural order and is widely accepted or at least tolerated by half-elves.) Gladiatorial combat is also viewed with disfavor, since many half-elves

Illus. by M. Moore

cannot understand why humans tolerate violence for the enrichment of gamblers and the amusement of the jaded.

Because of their natural inclination toward magic as well as their penchant for social skills, many half-elf wizards and sorcerers use their magic to become performers, blending arcane power and personal persuasion to deliver spectacular entertainment. While they are not as inherently talented at such activities as gnomes, half-elves produce subtle, thought-provoking displays of magical artistry that can inspire the masses. Most of these magical artists prefer to tailor their shows to the tastes of the audience, as opposed to creating a repertoire of amusements and diverions that they never deviate from, using the Gather Information skill to find out what are the hottest trends or which themes have not yet been explored in front of the current crowd. Generally, a DC 20 Gather Information check enables a performer to learn enough about a potential audience to get a +2 circumstance bonus on a subsequent Perform check.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Half-elves have an inherent propensity for creating beautiful works of art. They have their elf blood to thank for granting them a keen eye for seeing the majesty and subtlety of the natural world and the refinement to appreciate it, while their human side gives them the energy and drive to create with amazing speed and devotion. Some do this for fame and wealth, while others create art for its own sake, helping to provide an outlet for other frustrations they might have or just simply to while away the years. Half-elf artists have a long enough life span to be prolific, tempered with a human sense of urgency so they don't linger overlong on a single project.

While half-elf artisans have mastered almost all artistic endeavors, most become true masters at music, poetry, song, or dance—especially if they grew up among the elves. Those with a magical bent have learned how to mix their talents for song and visual art with the power of the occult to create truly amazing works.

Humans find half-elf bards particularly enjoyable, since they add a sense of refinement and a deep knowledge of many subjects to their works.

In general, human audiences respond well to half-elves because they have the exotic mystery of elves but are grounded in human experience. Viewing the performance or the artistry of a half-elf is a way for humans to experience an elf's perspective without having to fully embrace it. Critics have noted, however, that the art of half-elves tends to possess a twinge of melancholy and longing that is difficult to articulate, which can either be an added dimension or a negative trait, depending on the person doing the viewing.

Elves tend to either love or hate art produced by half-elves. Some elves find half-elf artwork work refreshing, bold, and innovative, containing elements that are lacking in the art of their people. Another camp finds half-elf art crude, distasteful, and lacking in subtlety as a result of human influence. A half-elf artist trying to impress elves may cave in to the demands of his audience and "toe the line," or he may refuse to compromise, seeing such negative opinions as less than visionary.

Half-elf artisans show just as much pride and skill in their work as any other talented artist. Thanks to the race's long-term perspective, items produced by half-elves are built to last the ages (something that dwarves begrudgingly admire), but are also designed with aesthetics in mind. A half-elf's patience may frustrate a human customer who needs a particular item made in a hurry. On the other hand, elves may not appreciate half-elf craftsmanship, seeing it as rushed to completion. Art forms for which creation time isn't an issue, such as improvised music, get high marks from elves.

Like elves, half-elves prefer working with natural mediums—wood, stone, and bark, as well as softer items, such as cloth and paper. Half-elf craftsfolk are not known for working with metals, although some of those who were trained as blacksmiths among humans can produce elegant works that incorporate fluid, natural forms.

TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC

Because of the elf blood flowing in their veins, most half-elves find connecting with arcane magic to be both easy and natural. Many half-elves become powerful wizards or sorcerers, especially those who were trained among other elves. Half-elves who were raised among humans are noted for being adaptable and more accepting of new ideas and magical forms.

Like elves, half-elves have a deep connection with the natural world and are more able than members of many other races to see the interrelation between life forms and forces in nature. When confronted with a problem that cannot be solved through mundane means, a half-elf is inclined to try to solve it through magical means or by taking a radically different approach. Elves marvel at how a half-elf can come up with what they see as a clearly elven innovation, while humans at the same time are quick to attribute the new idea to human skill and versatility.

Half-elf wizards are known to outnumber half-elf sorcerers, primarily because of the propensity for those of elf blood to intuitively understand the methods and forms of wizardry. Half-elf wizards can attain incredible power and demonstrate great diversity, thanks to their extended life spans (compared to those of humans), their understanding of the natural world, and their innovative, "outside the box" thinking. Half-elves are more common among the enrollees of human-dominated wizard schools than among the schools of the elves, mainly because humans are more willing to take chances and experiment than elves

are. Still, half-elves bring new insights and innovations to elven magic, which despite thousands of years of use still does not provide all the answers.

Wizardry appeals to half-elves for another reason: it's a good synthesis between their two heritages. A half-elf wizard is satisfied whenever he can combine ancient elf lore with cutting-edge human research.

Half-elf sorcerers, although not as common as wizards, appear with a frequency that gets notice among the arcane community. In many ways, these sorcerers are at the top of their profession, because sorcerers are naturally charismatic and half-elves are naturally personable. If human sorcerers are noted for their flamboyant, almost theatrical demeanor, half-elves are just as intriguing because of their more muted, yet intoxicatingly exotic auras and personalities.

Divine magic does not come as naturally to half-elves, but there are numerous examples of a half-elf picking up the banner of a particular deity's cause. Half-elf clerics typically worship nature-oriented deities, such as Corellon Larethian, Ehlonna, and, in rarer circumstances, Obad-Hai. Half-elves raised among humans have been known to worship almost any of the human deities, especially Pelor, Fharlanghn, and Olidammara.

Particularly rebellious half-elves worship a deity associated with whatever society they aren't part of (Corellon Larethian among humans and Ehlonna among elves, for example). Many half-elf clerics try to reconcile human and elf religious beliefs by choosing no deity at all, but instead selecting domains compatible with both human and elf goals.

Half-elf druids are much more common than half-elf clerics, mainly due to the connection that all half-elves have to the natural world. Human and elf societies sometimes force half-elves to live on their own in the deep forests of the world, where they come to feel the power, majesty, and danger that the wilderness offers. Half-elf druids usually have a more positive attitude toward elves than toward humans, since elves show much more respect for plants and animals than humans do.

Technology is often difficult for half-elves to grasp. If raised among elves, a half-elf views mechanical devices with a suspicious, scornful eye, seeing them as a blight upon the natural world. Among humans, a half-elf may be more inclined to tinker with technology, or at least acknowledge its existence, but few instances exist when half-elves have fully embraced technology. Half-elves understand that technology has a great potential for making life easier for those who use it, but they seem to subconsciously overlook its relevance to their daily lives, regarding it as yet another "weapon" that can be abused in the future by those who don't appreciate how technology ought to be used.

A half-elf wizard uses his magical and technological aptitude at the same time

Illus. by E. Cox

That said, some half-elves buck the stereotype and study the fledgling sciences of technology with the same zeal that half-elf artists and bards study song, painting, and dance. Again, blessed with a longer life span than humans, half-elves who study or design items of technology can produce amazing creations. Like anything else they create, technological devices manufactured by half-elves are often a wonderful blend of practicality and beauty. Artisans often attempt to create objects of technology that not only function properly, but have little impact on the surrounding terrain.

HALF-ELVES AT WAR

In general, half-elves see war as a necessary evil that should be confronted promptly in order to get it over with. A half-elf at war strives to combine human efficiency with elven grace. The result, embodied in a half-elf who is properly trained and equipped for war, is a combatant with an austere fighting style that wastes no movement and dispassionately dispatches foe after foe.

Half-elves learn martial techniques and receive training in whatever military traditions are prominent in their home society. Elves are trained from an early age (relatively speaking) in how to handle a blade and a bow; most half-elves receive the same training. The techniques of the elves emphasize quick, darting moves, rapid swordplay, and hit-and-run tactics that take advantage of their keen senses, quickness, and reaction time. While half-elves are not as dextrous as full-blooded elves, they do their best to emulate these tactics.

Half-elves who are a part of an elf army are generally relegated to the front ranks, where their hardier nature and their greater bulk (compared to elves) allows them to stay in the fight longer, while their more nimble kinfolk pepper foes with arrows and strike from the flanks. Half-elves may resent this treatment, seeing themselves thought of as tainted half-breeds that are pressed into service in the most dangerous area of the battlefield.

If raised among humans, a half-elf learns the tactics of warfare common in that society. It should be noted, however, that even if a human society's view on combat emphasizes brute force and blunt attacks, a half-elf still retains the gracefulness derived from his elf blood. If half-elves are common in a human-dominated army, they find their niche in roles that use quick strikes and stealth—scouts, skirmishers, and snipers.

Half-elf spellcasters, particularly sorcerers, emulate the same hit-and-run tactics, but using a barrage of spells rather than arrows. Half-elf spellcasters in the employ of elves make extensive use of *sleep* spells and enchantments, which they can employ without fear of affecting themselves or their comrades.

This half-elf ranger uses terrain to his advantage in a conflict with enemies

Illus. by E. Cox

Because they wander so much and associate with so many other races, half-elves can be found in the ranks of other races' armies as well. Half-elf mercenaries are common, drifting from country to country on the tides of war. More than a few half-elves have fought alongside gnomes, halflings, or more exotic allies. Elves or humans may balk at these alliances, but half-elves merely shrug and affirm that they are willing to fight for any group that accepts them for who they are. Dwarves are the least likely race to employ half-elves, but some clans appreciate their value as scouts and skirmishers.

Due to their propensity for guerilla warfare, half-elves have trouble understanding the role of machines of war in combat and may underestimate their use and power.

Roleplaying Application: Consider your character's attitude toward organized warfare. What major wars occurred during your character's lifetime? Has she experienced war as a soldier or a civilian? Consider also how your character feels about soldiers who wage war for a living, and about monarchs who order others into battle from the safety of their royal fortresses.

HALF-ELF SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Half-elves naturally sit astride two cultures: the inventive, ambitious societies of the humans, and the sedate, ancient communities of the elves. Within either society, half-elves make for themselves a sort of cultural compromise, blending the traditions of their dual heritage as best they can.

In most cases, half-elves express their dual nature by fitting in when they can and incorporating the best aspects of both cultures when they can't. They aren't just trying to reconcile the two halves of their own psyche, they're trying to harmonize and synthesize the members of any two groups who are estranged from each other. Half-elves raised among humans—a majority of the race—act more like elves, demonstrating refinement and a love of the arts. When half-elves live among elves, they're often the most ambitious, activist members of their communities. Half-elves thus form a bridge between human and elf cultures, offering both a familiar face and some exotic behavioral tendencies.

One way in which half-elves emphasize their dual heritage is by taking a name that reflects the absent part of their ancestry. A half-elf among humans often takes an elf name, while one living with elves takes a name following the human custom. The resulting foreign-sounding name reminds both a half-elf and those around him that he and other half-elves stand a half-step apart from the rest of society.

A few half-elves live in small communities composed entirely of their fellow half-elves. Such communities often spring from racially segregated neighborhoods in teeming metropolises or large family settlements that grow into villages. When two half-elves breed, the progeny is another half-elf, so these communities can sustain themselves indefinitely. Half-elf communities generally follow human traditions and are located in human lands. However, more xenophobic elf societies might have settlements of exiled half-elves just outside their borders, and the members of a few half-elf communities reject both human and elf mores in favor of developing an exotic culture unique to themselves.

Many half-elves give up on fitting in with elves and strike out on their own instead

Illus. by J. Miracola

HALF-ELVES AND OTHER RACES

Fitting in everywhere and yet never quite belonging, half-elves have interaction with other races that depends on understanding and compromise. Most half-elves do their best to fit in well with whatever society they live in, but they are continually reminded of how different they are. A few half-elves resent the customs and traditions of their host society, but most embrace new experiences and try to relate them to something more familiar.

Dwarves: Half-elves generally view dwarves as inflexible and incapable of compromise, and they can't understand why dwarves can't negotiate and experiment more. However, some aspects of dwarf society appeal to half-elves. Dwarves are more understanding of the "long view" than humans are, and they're nowhere near as pretentious as elves are.

Dwarves, in turn, see half-elves as victims of bad breeding, with a heritage that encompasses both the elves' frivolity and the humans' arrogance. Dwarves have a hard time understanding the wanderlust that takes hold of many half-elves. Wise dwarves know that half-elves make acceptable intermediaries between antagonistic bands of dwarves and elves, helping to foster a spirit of cooperation when a crisis threatens both races.

Elves: Half-elves have complex emotional reactions when it comes to their elf kin. If raised among elves, a half-elf often has to cope with the paternalistic attitude or outright condescension that comes from elves

who have disdain for the half-elf's young chronological age. Many half-elves react to this treatment with jealousy and bitterness. Some try to overcompensate by acting as "mature" and "elflike" as possible, voraciously learning the intricacies of the culture to the best of their ability. Other half-elves never overcome their feelings of inferiority and end up abandoning their elf kin, regarding them with loathing and spite.

Most half-elves strive for the middle ground, learning from and respecting their elf heritage while understanding that they will never truly belong to it. These individuals are usually filled with wanderlust, going off to explore the world but occasionally coming back to reconnect with the beautiful, serene lifestyle of the elves.

Goliaths: Half-elves have a mildly positive attitude toward goliaths (a new race described in *Races of Stone*). Although they are justifiably somewhat intimidated by the physical prowess of these humanoids, they can also see beneath the goliaths' primitive demeanor to find a rich culture and deep respect for the world in which the goliaths live. Some half-elves are content to live among tribes of goliaths, who view half-elves as only "short" rather than "of mixed blood."

Gnomes: Half-elves have a favorable view toward gnomes, enjoying their spirit and zeal for life. Gnomes are generally quick to overlook a half-elf's mixed heritage, regarding it as a nonissue. As long as the half-elf is friendly, helpful, and can take a joke, who cares who his parents were?

Half-elves who leave the homes of their elf or human parents often find refuge in the small villages and warrens of the gnomes, who welcome them with open arms. Half-elves enjoy the chance to join such a community, even if they must contend with stooping and crouching most of the time.

Half-orcs: Half-elves show a marked disfavor toward half-orcs, at least partly because their parallel heritage hits uncomfortably close to home. Half-orcs think that half-elves are too cowardly to make their own way in the world, and that they're continually pretending to be something they aren't.

Both elves and humans have serious conflicts with orcs, so half-elves retain this sense of suspicion and distrust. In addition, the marked difference in the social refinement of the two races makes half-elves feel superior to half-orcs. Many half-elves think that they got the best traits of both races, while half-orcs received the worst.

A few half-elves overcome this prejudice and realize that they and half-orcs have much in common. Both groups are stigmatized and distrusted, after all.

Halflings: Much like gnomes, halflings are good partners for half-elves because halflings overlook the mixed-blood issue. Half-elves understand and appreciate the nomadic lifestyle of many halflings, and some spend years traveling with a halfling clan as it explores new territory. Relatively short and slender themselves, half-elves do not pay much attention to the unimposing stature of halflings. Half-elves admire the traits that make halflings experts at survival and capable of standing up to adversity with a grin.

Humans: Just as humans have mixed views on half-elves, so do half-elves have widely varying opinions of humans. A half-elf's particular attitude toward humanity depends on the culture in which he was raised. If he was accepted into the culture, he'll probably have a positive view toward humans. If he was treated harshly, his attitude will be much more negative and resentful. Even a half-elf who is entirely accepting of human society and customs can feel the difference between himself and his full-blooded human kin. Half-elves admire humanity's passion, drive, and sense of adventure, but they are dismayed by its shortsightedness, propensity for violence, and tendency toward xenophobia. Half-elves become impromptu ambassadors in human lands (whether they want to or not) due to their natural social skills. They strive to smooth the ground between humans and other races, if only so that they can continue to survive.

Illumians: Half-elves share a kinship with illumians (a new race described in Chapter 3) because each race is outwardly human but inwardly quite different from humans. The illumians' ongoing experiments in becoming the living embodiment of a magical language are fascinating to most half-elves.

HALF-ELVES: NATURAL NEGOTIATORS

Thanks to their racial bonuses on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks, half-elves naturally fill the roles of negotiator, arbiter, and diplomat. Lacking a society and culture of their own, half-elves naturally take to straddling the boundary between different groups, using their skills and grace to smooth out problems and hostilities. While this status would seem a natural for a prestige class, you can instead apply the respect granted to a negotiator as a racewide trait.

As an option, you can decide that half-elves have an elevated status among both humans and elves if they take up the mantle of negotiator. Negotiators may come from any class, but should have the maximum number of ranks possible in Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Sense Motive. Obviously, members of socially focused classes such as bard or rogue work best as negotiators, but some cultures distrust these kinds of people and have greater respect for clerics or fighters. In addition to having the requisite skills, negotiators must be decidedly neutral and must not swear an allegiance to either side. Some of these negotiators travel throughout the land, lending their services where they are needed.

A negotiator in a group of adventurers will shine best at times when she can use her skills to talk out and solve problems. You do not have to limit the use of these skills to urban settings—a negotiator in the thick of the wild may be well respected by a band of hobgoblins.

HALF-ELF RELIGION

For half-elves, where they grew up determines who they worship. Half-elves raised by elves tend to worship Corellon Larethian. Those raised by humans worship one of the human deities, often Ehlonna, Fharlanghn, Boccob, or Olidammara.

At the same time, half-elves know they were born of two worlds, so the religious traditions of the other half of their heritage pull at them strongly. Many half-elves go through a crisis of allegiance at some point in their lives, and some convert to the worship of a different deity at that time. Many of Ehlonna's half-elf clerics grew up sending prayers to Corellon Larethian, for example, but their natural curiosity about human deities later led them to Ehlonna, and after much soul-searching, they pledged their allegiance to the Lady of the Woodlands. Even those who resist the lure of changing religions are apt to learn quite a bit about the faiths of both elves and humans, which helps to make them feel at home with both human and elf religious traditions.

HALF-ELF HISTORY AND FOLKLORE

Half-elves have no great nations to call their own, and few myths and legends of any importance. They tend to be avid storytellers, however, regaling audiences with fables and folklore from both elf and human traditions.

Half-elves often share a story from the "exotic" half of their nature. In a group of humans, a half-elf will tell the tale of how Corellon Larethian shot out Gruumsh's eye. Elves will instead get a retelling of "Lakeem and the Lure of the Sea" (a human legend described on page 24).

HALF-ELF LANGUAGE

Half-elves are naturally bilingual, speaking both Common and Elven, but their proficiency with Elven isn't as perfect as that of an elf. A bit of human accent often creeps into a half-elf's speech patterns, and any elf can notice a trace of half-Elven dialect in a half-elf speaker who utters more than a few sentences. It generally takes a DC 15 Disguise check for a half-elf posing as an elf to mask his accent.

Half-elves speak Common perfectly, and many have a love of the language that leads them to become accomplished orators or authors. Many half-elves take up the life of a bard, and the best among them speak Common better than a full-blooded human.

HALF-ELF SETTLEMENTS

Half-elves take pride in fitting into whatever community they find themselves in; as a result, segregated communities dominated by half-elves are rare. It's much more common to find a half-elf cousin living with an elf family in a treetop village, or a half-elf minstrel plying his trade along a river route dotted with human towns.

When half-elf communities exist, they tend to be very small, and they're usually created at the behest of someone else. A human tyrant might move all the half-elf residents of a city into a ghetto neighborhood, or an elf community obsessed with "purity" might send all the half-elves in the area to exile at the edge of the forest. Occasionally, a persuasive half-elf manages to gather a crowd of half-elves into a community with promises of creating a home where all of them will truly fit in.

CREATING HALF-ELF CHARACTERS

Half-elf is a good choice for your character's race if you know you're going to be interacting with NPCs in ways other than showing them the end of your sword. Half-elves are natural negotiators and diplomats, and you'll have a racial edge when you try to pump the bartender for information or convince the dragon to let you and your friends pass by.

That choice doesn't necessarily mean that rogue and bard are the classes for you, or that you have to spend a lot of skill points on Diplomacy and Gather Information. You can just as easily play a half-elf fighter who's just a little more articulate than most fighters, or a half-elf wizard who blends in better than most of his compatriots of other races. As long as you want your character to enjoy conversing with NPCs, half-elf is a solid choice for race no matter what class you pursue.

HALF-ELVES AS CHARACTERS

Like humans, half-elves have many options available to them when determining class. Because of their elf blood, many half-elves become wizards, although most such characters also have levels in one or more other classes. Half-elves have a natural social grace that allows them to excel in interpersonal situations, and as such many half-elves are drawn to the ranks of the bards. Half-elf sorcerers also gain benefits to the use of certain social skills, which are made all that more potent if such a character has a high Charisma score.

No matter which class you choose, consider spending some skill points on Diplomacy and Gather Information, even if they are cross-class skills for you. Because of the racial bonuses you already receive for choosing this race, you'll be all the better off after adding even a few skill points. Half-elves are naturally regarded as excellent spokespersons and may be forced into that role, even if they are not prepared for it.

Barbarian: Half-elves who grow up in far-flung lands that offer little in the way of civilization often learn the ways of the barbarian. This is particularly true if a half-elf was raised among wild elves or was abandoned by his parents at an early age to fend for himself. The half-elf's

bonuses on Listen and Spot checks, as well as low-light vision, mesh well with the skills and the needs of the barbarian class.

Bard: Half-elf bards are extremely common, thanks to the half-elf's racial bonuses on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks. Half-elves wander a great deal, and a bard can pick up a tremendous number of tales and songs as he explores new territory.

For alternative options for the half-elf bard, see the half-elf racial substitution levels presented on page 157.

Cleric: Clerics are relatively rare among half-elves. As mentioned earlier, most half-elf clerics worship Corellon Larethian, a human deity, or no deity at all. Most half-elf clerics choose deities that exemplify nature, and many take levels in druid to gain additional powers that are tied to the power of the land.

Druid: Half-elf druids are common, often found living on the edge between human and elf territories. Those who were raised among elves focus heavily on withdrawing into nature, while those who were raised by humans tend to become ambassadors and stewards of the land, negotiating peace between groups that may cause harm to the wilderness they love.

Fighter: Since half-elves are unable to benefit from the increased dexterity of elves or the additional feat gained by humans, fighter may not seem like an obvious choice for a half-elf's class. However, half-elves are somewhat hardier than elves (thus allowing them to stay in a fight longer) and are more alert than humans (making them excellent at skirmishing or some other fighting form that relies more on speed and quickness than brute strength).

For alternative options for the half-elf fighter, see the half-elf racial substitution levels presented on page 157.

Monk: Similar to the fighter, the monk isn't an obvious class choice for a half-elf. However, the race's keen senses come in handy for stealthy monks who move like the wind and strike from the shadows. Also, monasteries are well known for accepting individuals based on their abilities and their merit, not their lineage. A half-elf may find solace and peace within a monastery when no other place accepts him.

Paladin: Half-elf paladins are even more scarce than half-elf clerics. While human paladins are often respected for their devotion to their deities, half-elf paladins are more ecumenical in their outlook—but they smite evildoers just as hard. Most half-elf paladins eschew the stereotype of the heavily armed and armored stalwart combatant, acting with quickness and alacrity to mete out justice. Half-elf paladins are more common among half-elves raised by humans than among those raised by elves.

Ranger: Half-elves make superb rangers, thanks in part to their keen senses. Their elf blood often counts as a benefit when dealing with creatures of the forest, particularly fey, who may distrust any other sort of character. Half-elf rangers have a slight tendency toward the path of archery over that of two-weapon fighting, especially if they were raised among elves.

For alternative options for the half-elf ranger, see the half-elf racial substitution levels presented on page 158.

Sorcerer: Half-elf sorcerers are even more flamboyant and over-the-top than their human counterparts. Although Diplomacy and Gather Information are cross-class skills for them, many half-elf sorcerers pick up ranks in these skills, making them much more personable than the average spellcaster.

Wizard: Many half-elves take at least a few levels in wizard, especially if they grew up among elves. That said, half-elf wizards are difficult to categorize; between them, they have studied virtually every variation of the arcane arts. Since half-elves prefer to stay on the move, half-elf wizards choose feats and skills that do not require them to get bogged down; for instance, most shy away from item creation feats.

SPECIAL HALF-ELF OPTIONS

A half-elf character qualifies for some feats and prestige classes unavailable to PCs of other races (or most other races), as described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this book.

Feats: Complementary Insight, Diverse Background, Fearless Destiny, Heroic Destiny, Human Heritage, Protected Destiny, and Sociable Personality.

Prestige Classes: Outcast champion, scar enforcer.

THE HALF-ORC: A DAY IN THE LIFE

"Wake up and get moving. We don't want your kind here," the watchman insisted. "I keep the peace around here, and you're not welcome."

Why? Tersh the half-orc wanted to ask. *I paid for my lodgings and my food—I bring business, and good hard coins. I don't start fights, or curse, or get rowdy. Why am I not welcome?* But he knew the reason.

"Leave now, and don't come back," the man demanded, and Tersh smothered a laugh. "Or else!"

The threat made him growl. *A threat? From this flimsy little man with his puffy face and thinning hair?*

Straightening to his full height, Tersh tossed his hood back, hefted the club on his shoulder, and glowered down at the man. "Or else what?" he growled. "You'll attack me? Go ahead—I can use a good meal." He bared his tusks fully and took a step forward.

That was all it took. The man broke and ran, his scabbard banging against his leg. Tersh laughed, then sighed. *That was fun, but I have to learn how not to lose my temper like that. . . .*

HALF-ORC PSYCHOLOGY

Spurned by both sides of their heritage, half-orcs are rebels who don't fit into society—and often don't *want* to fit into society. Their central psychological trait, developed as a defense mechanism, is a stubborn independent streak that keeps everyone and everything at a safe distance.

At their best, half-orcs are independent and cautious, always alert for danger from every quarter. At their worst, they're rage-fueled time bombs, lashing out at anything that gets too close—whether it's an ally or an enemy.

QUICK TO JUDGE, QUICK TO ANGER

Half-orcs spend their lives looking over their shoulders, waiting for the next blow to fall. By the time they reach adulthood, most have been tricked and betrayed so many times that they don't easily trust anyone else. The typical half-orc is abandoned at birth, bullied throughout childhood, and cast out into the wilderness as an adolescent. As a result, most of the half-orcs who reach adulthood are cunning and wary to the point of being paranoid.

Half-orcs have been in danger their whole lives, so they have learned to make split-second assessments of a situation and react accordingly. And their stubborn, independent streak means that they'll stick with that first assessment even if they later suspect it was the wrong call. Many a half-orc has attacked a bystander, only to learn after the fact that his "foe" meant him no harm. Half-orcs realize, however, that taking time for reasoned contemplation of a threat is a luxury not usually available to them.

Just as half-orcs are quick to make judgments, so too are they quick to change moods.

Like orcs, they tend to be sullen and short-tempered, snarling or lashing out at anything that displeases them. They prefer action to thought and would rather settle a dispute with fighting than with words. Half-orcs wear their emotions on their sleeves, becoming wildly exuberant when they are happy and deeply brooding when they are displeased. Perhaps because of this straightforwardness in the display of their emotions, half-orcs despise trickery and lies and usually respond to such insults with overwhelming violence.

A half-orc raised among humans has to learn to keep his most violent outbursts under control. Exceptions may exist if the humans of a community are particularly barbaric themselves, but few settlements will tolerate anyone who attacks with little or no provocation. Most half-orcs learn to channel their anger into focused rages (some of them becoming the quintessential barbarian), while still striving to attain the elusive goal of a contemplative state of mind.

Because half-orcs are creatures of quick judgment, they have a hard time dealing with tasks that require sustained, nuanced reasoning. Most philosophical discussions not only go over the heads of most half-orcs, but bore them no end. While most half-orcs are considerably smarter than their orc parents, they all retain (to varying degrees) a rather brutish intellect that tends to categorize people, items, and concepts in black-and-white terms. To a half-orc, a creature, idea, or thing is either good, bad, or unworthy of his further attention.

BRUTAL CHILDHOODS

Most half-orcs grow up hiding from full-blooded human children, weary of the bombardment of taunts and insults they find themselves subjected to. Full-blooded human adults can be just as cruel, so a half-orc often finds refuge only within his immediate family—assuming he was not abandoned as a baby (which is the fate of many half-orcs soon after they come into the world).

Once a half-orc in a human community reaches puberty, life changes for him, but it doesn't get any easier. Still visibly different in appearance from other children, now he is also noticeably larger and stronger, better able to defend himself against bullies. Since half-orcs mature slightly more rapidly than humans, an adolescent half-orc may be almost at his full adult height and weight, which makes him more than a match for the human children around him.

Many half-orcs grow up to become bullies themselves, intent on paying back the other children for years of humiliation. After a half-orc is tormented throughout his early childhood, it understandably feels good to now be bigger and stronger than most human children, perhaps even formidable enough to make adult humans back away.

Other people's underlying attitudes toward the race, however, don't change just because a half-orc puts on a few extra pounds of muscle. If anything, the physical difference between half-orcs and humans reinforces the stereotype. Humans assume that half-orcs are brutish bullies, and young half-orcs unwittingly exacerbate that fear. By the time a half-orc matures enough to learn how to behave "properly" in human society, the damage is often done. As a result, many half-orcs leave home shortly before or soon after reaching adulthood. They escape to find someplace where people do not know them, in the hopes of starting over.

Roleplaying Application: The key to knowing or understanding any half-orc lies in the character's parentage. If your character is a half-orc, think about who his parents were, and how they met. Was your character's conception and birth the result of love, an arranged marriage, or an abduction? Consider also your childhood: you could have been kept by your parents, given up for adoption, or left for dead.

NO TRUE PLACE IN SOCIETY

Human societies usually relegate half-orcs to the fringes, where they eke out a meager subsistence-level existence through begging, menial labor, or selling their formidable fighting skills. Because of this treatment, many half-orcs become bitter and resentful toward humans, harboring deep

grudges that last a lifetime. A few lucky half-orcs grow up in more enlightened societies that don't make value judgments about racial identity—but even those individuals come face to face with pervasive prejudice as soon as they visit the wider world.

Half-orcs who are raised by orcs commonly become almost indistinguishable on the surface from their more brutish kin. They must be tough and merciless to survive, although their higher wisdom enables them to be much more cunning in their attempts to survive. Half-orcs raised in an orc tribe or community learn to respect strength above any other quality and have difficulty understanding the nuances of subtlety, tact, and diplomacy.

Roleplaying Application: Give some thought to how your character responds to the glares, rudeness, and outright unfairness of discrimination. You might try to conceal what you are, or you might revel in your racial identity because of the intimidation factor it offers. You might hope that friends and neighbors will forget overlook your heritage, or you might display your half-orc nature proudly, daring anyone to stare or sneer at you.

HERITAGE OF SHAME

No matter where they were raised, all half-orcs share a sense of shame. Deep down, every half-orc feels that he embarrasses both of his parent races, and that people treat him as a monster because he is one. This sense of shame persists even when the half-orc in question is a paragon of virtue and the shame is undeserved. A half-orcs's low self-worth is a wound that won't heal, though its pain can be deadened from time to time.

This attitude lies at the heart of the half-orc mind-set. Both his human family and his orc family treat a half-orc like a poor relation and sneer at his shortcomings.Orcs laugh at half-orcs because of their relative frailty and their less imposing size. Humans mock them for their coarse hair, their gray skin, and their intellectual and social clumsiness.

LIVING IN THE NOW

Half-orcs have the shortest life span of any of the common races. Even if they survive their various adventures, few half-orcs live past the age of 70 or 75, and 60 is considered an advanced age.

As a consequence of this situation, half-orcs take their lives either very seriously or not seriously at all. Some individuals cherish every moment, seeking to wring as much satisfaction as they can out of life before it ends. Others feel that, since their lives are so brutish and short, nothing truly matters, and they do whatever comes to mind with no thought for the consequences.

For example, few half-orcs save money; they prefer to spend whatever they have right away, while they can. At the same time, half-orcs rarely bother with luxury items. They may indulge in good food, good drink, and good weapons and armor, but fine furniture, rich clothing, and luxurious homes seem foolish purchases to someone who may not live long enough to fully enjoy them.

THE STUPID STEREOTYPE

Everyone assumes that half-orcs are strong but stupid, and so they are taught as children to rely on their physical prowess rather than their intellect. Many half-orcs believe that strength is their only asset, so they fall into the role of "big and stupid" because they resign themselves to it and society expects it.

Half-orcs can be quick and stealthy, but most blunder about instead because they do not consider themselves agile or quiet and so have never honed certain skills. Half-orc rogues are rare but surprisingly effective, in part because no one expects a half-orc to be able to hide and sneak successfully.

THE HALF-ORC LIFE

Half-orcs make their own way in the world and, in so doing, essentially invent their own lifestyle. Most half-orcs seldom encounter other half-orcs, so the only guide they have for how to live a half-orc lifestyle is the often cruel stereotype maintained by humans or orcs. Whether a half-orc lives among humans, among orcs, or alone, certain innate likes and dislikes arise within the individual. A half-orc's harsh upbringing encourages and feeds these instinctive attitudes.

Many half-orcs have a lifestyle dominated by the desires to survive and to stay free of entanglements with the societies that spurned them. They grow up defending themselves from bullies and graduate to becoming bullies themselves. This sort of life leaves little time for introspection or relaxation. Half-orcs are creatures of action, partially because everyone expects this trait of them. They are considered too stupid to think things through, too dumb to plan, and as a result most half-orcs into this belief, charging into situations rather than considering their actions before carrying them out. Half-orcs are raised believing that their size and strength (relative to humans) are their greatest assets, and so they seek out activities that focus on these features. When they are not out adventuring, most half-orcs hunt, engage in physical training, or practice with weapons.

LEISURE

Half-orcs enjoy the simple pleasures of life. They like drinking, eating, carousing, singing boisterous songs, and getting into an occasional scrap that allows them to test their mettle.

Loud music, dangerous brawls, and copious quantities of alcohol have the same effect on a half-orc: They enable him to momentarily lose himself in sensation and forget the pain and cruelty of his existence. When a half-orc is beating a drum with all his might or smashing a skeleton to bits,

he isn't thinking about his heritage or his place in society. He is entirely caught up in the moment and oblivious to everything else because it's irrelevant.

Because physical acts provide such visceral sensations, half-orcs find great joy in running, wrestling, and tests of strength, especially when competing against others. Even half-orcs who have controlled their violent behavior still show signs of aggression and are at least moderately competitive.

When they get caught up in the moment during some form of intense physical activity, many half-orcs lack the common sense to know when enough is enough. They either push themselves to such an extent that they get sick or injured, or they injure someone else.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Half-orcs have little understanding of creative endeavors and cannot comprehend what others see in paintings, sculptures, and certain forms of music. Still, half-orcs do revel in the beat of primitive music and the display of crude imagery—the savageness of such "art forms" appeals to their orc blood.

When half-orcs enjoy art, it's almost always as a recipient and not as a creator. In their formative years, half-orcs are more often handed swords instead of paint brushes and shields instead of woodcarving tools. Nevertheless, some half-orcs do pick up a brush or a trowel or a chisel and teach themselves to create works of beauty. Most members of the race are content to admire such works, and occasionally to buy them with the money they earn from selling their fighting talents. Half-orcs are particularly fond of art that illustrates idyllic landscapes, because these works provide a window into a world they could never enter otherwise.

TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC

Half-orcs are rarely taught to read and write, and even fewer learn advanced subjects. As a result, many technical trades are beyond them, and few would believe that a half-orc could be an inventor or an engineer. Half-orcs are relatively cunning, however, and can often see the practical elements in a new device—or the flaws that only someone closely connected to the real world would notice.

Half-orcs have no problems using devices, and most are willing to try new types of equipment. Their own lives have shown them that appearance is not always a key indicator of quality, and they keep an open mind about new ideas and new tools. But they are users, not creators, of these ideas and tools.

This "user, not creator" tendency extends to magic as well. Few half-orcs study magic, in part because most spellcasters and many churches refuse to consider them for admission as students. Nevertheless, half-orcs have no innate objection to magic; most are willing to work with spellcasters, fight for them, and use the magic items they create. Half-orc spellcasters are few and far between, but those few are highly respected, for

Two half-orcs prepare for a fight by dancing themselves into a frenzy

Illus. by R. Spencer

they bring a determination and a resilience to the use of magic that few others can match. Other wizards automatically take a half-orc spellcaster seriously—if she's capable enough to overcome the inherent disadvantages of her race, she's capable enough to worry about.

Strangers often assume that the relative stupidity of half-orcs causes them to reject technology and magic. This assumption is unfair and untrue. Half-orcs are not bright compared to their human kin, but they can think circles around their orc relatives. A few rare half-orcs prove to be quite intelligent and even studious, if given a chance to show what they can do.

Illus. by J. Nelson

An older half-orc finds satisfying employment as a bouncer for the local tavern

HALF-ORCS AT WAR

Half-orcs are expected to excel at combat, and many do. Their size and strength give them an inherent advantage over a large number of foes, and many learn to channel their childhood rage into a battlefield frenzy, becoming deadly opponents. Of course, no one expects them to care about strategy, and as a result most half-orcs serve merely as foot soldiers and shock troops, to be sent here and there across the battlefield as the situation warrants.

Half-orcs are more cunning than many people realize, and their experience with pain and hardship provides them with insight into the ways of armies and soldiers. Half-orcs make excellent scouts, because they can cover distances with good speed and can dispatch any enemy soldiers they encounter along the way. Because half-orcs have darkvision, they are particularly good at nighttime scouting and reconnoitering.

HALF-ORC SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Discussing half-orc society is difficult, because few such societies exist. Half-orcs rarely encounter one another, and they almost never gather in numbers greater than what a single mobile encampment can accommodate. Particularly at a young age, some half-orcs assume that they are the only creatures of their kind, and they consider themselves accidents of breeding rather than members of a distinct race.

Most half-orcs grow up either in a human community or in an orc tribe. They adopt the attitudes and interests of that culture, even though they're often ostracized by that culture at the same time. Therein lies part of the reason why half-orcs do not form their own communities. They are taught from birth that they do not belong anywhere or with anyone, and that they can never fit in. Thus, they assume that they have no real place in the world, and that no one else could possibly want to live near them.

In human communities, half-orcs are treated as the ugly children, the bastards, and the idiots. They receive abuse every day; they are tolerated only for their parents' sake, and, when they get older, because of their strength. Every day a half-orc among humans hears about how orcs are filthy creatures—considered as nothing more than animals that walk upright—and is told that he should try to conceal that portion of his heritage.

Orcs raise half-orc children to believe that humanity is weak and decadent, and that a half-orc must be strong to overcome these vulnerabilities in himself. Half-orcs in an orc tribe get insulted and abused just as severely as those in a human community, but the orcs justify this treatment as a way to make half-orcs stronger and tougher. Orc tribes discourages half-orcs from engaging in original thought, urging them to lose themselves in the tribal mentality. If this indoctrination is successful, a young half-orc regards himself as a true orc trapped in a half-orc body.

THE SOLACE OF FRIENDSHIP

Half-orcs say they aren't looking for a home or for friends. Only when one befriends others and grows fond of a place—usually against the half-orc's better judgment—does he realize what a treasure friendship is. Even then, a half-orc is loath to admit such feelings and reluctant to let his guard down.

Adventurers are a half-orc's most likely candidates for companionship. Many who follow the path of the adventurer have seen things far stranger and uglier than a half-orc, who to them is merely a person who happens to be larger and coarser than the average human. Many half-orcs stick with an adventuring lifestyle despite the dangers—not to win fame and fortune (though that is also a goal), but because adventurers treat them as equals and speak to them without fear.

Older half-orcs often settle in trading towns and other places where adventurers gather. Many become bouncers for taverns, a job for which their size and strength is useful. Some retired half-orc adventurers establish inns and watering holes of their own, using their fearsome appearance and adventuring reputation to attract business from residents and travelers alike.

Half-orcs value friendship and respect more than members of any other race, because they experience both so rarely. A typical half-orc will do anything for his friends, and will help them without question. But gaining a half-orc's trust is difficult, even for his friends—years of enduring insults have taught half-orcs to be cautious toward other folk and to expect harsh words instead of kind ones.

Nor do half-orcs fawn over people to win respect. They know from experience that such methods foster only false, transitory approval at best. Instead, most half-orcs act naturally, warn annoying people away, and wait to see whether anyone can accept them as they are.

HALF-ORCS AND OTHER RACES

Half-orcs live their lives surrounded by members of other races. They rarely see other half-orcs, but they usually live among humans or orcs and often interact with dwarves, elves, halflings, and gnomes.

In their own hostile way, half-orcs raised by humans are often more tolerant toward other races than anyone else in the community—tolerant in the sense that they're just as rude to elves and dwarves as they are to humans. Such individuals also have firsthand experience in being hated for being different, so they are less likely to scorn other outcasts.

Half-orcs raised by orcs are the opposite. They learn to hate anyone who is not an orc, and to despise dwarves and elves in particular. The sections that follow deal primarily with half-orcs who were raised among humans.

Dwarves: Half-orcs think that dwarves would be funny if they weren't so dangerous. These short, stout creatures are so serious, so judgmental, and so task-oriented, yet they can drink for days and sit up singing songs for nights on end. Half-orcs respect dwarves for their strength, and admire their skill with both weapons and stone, but they think dwarves should learn to relax a little. Still, dwarves make good companions, because they always keep their word and they're good in a fight. These two elements sometimes unite dwarves and half-orcs, and members of the two races can be suprisingly staunch companions.

Elves: Every half-orc knows that the elves look down upon him, and every half-orc offers seething resentment in return for the elves' contempt.

That said, some half-orcs secretly wish they could be more elflike. Elves are slight, graceful, magical, and enigmatic—everything a half-orc is not.

Gnomes: Gnomes and half-orcs have little in common. One race is small, quick, and clever; the other is large, strong, and not interested in devices or magic. But both races don't appreciate humans, elves, and dwarves who dismiss them as unimportant, so there's at least a little common ground.

Goliaths: Most half-orcs have never met a goliath and do not know this reclusive race exists. Those who do travel into the mountains, however, often come to respect these "stony" creatures. In turn, goliaths who meet half-orcs are surprised to find that the half-orcs show more respect toward nature than some other races and live more closely tied to the earth and to their instincts. Half-orc barbarians who live near a tribe of goliath barbarians are often welcome guests who visit, hunt, and trade regularly with the tribe.

Halflings: Of all the common races, halflings have the least in common with half-orcs. To a half-orc, a halfling is essentially a human but on a smaller scale—possessing the intelligence and quick-witted cruelty of humans, but not the humans' size and strength. Halflings see half-orcs as the embodiment of everything big and brutish about humans. The two races do not get along, and half-orcs and halflings spend as little time together as possible.

Half-Elves: Half-orcs envy half-elves, sometimes to the point of hatred. They see half-elves as people who should be their compatriots, being half-human as they are—but their other half is elf, lending them grace and beauty while half-orcs suffer from social ineptness and ugliness. Half-elves are usually accepted by members of both of their parent races,

while half-orcs have to struggle to be accepted by even one of theirs.

Most half-elves dislike half-orcs, or at least feel uncomfortable around them, perhaps because seeing them reminds half-elves how easy their own lives have been, and how much they have taken for granted.

Humans: As a general rule, half-orcs grow up among humans and spend most of their time with them. Even so, most humans see half-orcs as representatives of something incomplete or corrupted, and thus they never get past that broad assumption to an appreciation of the individual. As a consequence, half-orcs are wary around humans—they know from long experience how nasty these people can be.

Illumians: Half-orcs have had little contact with illumians, and a race of esoteric librarians doesn't interest them much.

Keep in mind that the above sections only describe half-orcs who were raised by humans. A typical half-orc raised by orcs would hate elves and dwarves, distrust humans, and consider gnomes and halflings obnoxious creatures good only for sport, torture, and food.

HALF-ORC RELIGION

Half-orcs follow either an orc religion or a human religion, depending on where they were raised. No half-orc deity exists, and half-orcs have never gathered to focus their prayers on a single entity.

Those who grow up in orc tribes follow Gruumsh, the chief god of the orcs. Gruumsh is a god of war and of strength, two of a half-orc's specialties, and thus many half-orcs find him an inspiring, if bloodthirsty, god to follow.

Gruumsh teaches that the weak should not be tolerated, and that everyone must strive for strength and endurance. He also teaches hatred toward elves and dwarves. Because these races hate orcs (and, by association, any half-orcs raised by orcs), it seems only reasonable to hate them back. Gruumsh is a god of action, demanding sacrifices and victories in battle rather than prayer. Thus, he is a good match for the half-orc's propensity toward action and violence.

A half-orc raised in a human community may worship whichever human god was revered in their area and by his human parent. Kord focuses on strength and activity, and half-orcs can relate to him. Heironeous promotes bravery and honor, two ideals half-orcs can strive toward. Some of the noblest half-orcs have been followers of Heironeous, and this god is open-minded enough to allow even half-orc paladins (though they are rare).

Half-orcs who grow up alone in the wild rarely have religion, because no one has taught them about the gods. Those who later discover the gods may follow Obad-Hai, placing their faith in nature and neutrality.

HALF-ORC HISTORY AND FOLKLORE

As mentioned above, half-orcs think they alone suffer their sad fate, and few realize they have kindred in type if not in actual blood. Thus, half-orcs have no organized history and no folklore, because the race is not cohesive as other races are. Half-orcs simply don't have the town squares, wandering minstrels, and smoky campfires required to sustain an oral tradition. A half-orc typically considers himself either human or orc in heritage, and takes his history and folklore from that parent race.

HALF-ORC LANGUAGE

Half-orcs have no language of their own. Instead, each learns the language of his home community—Common in a human settlement or Orc in an orc tribe. Most orc encampments speak some Common as well, in order to trade with others and to eavesdrop on them, so half-orcs who live with orcs often speak both tongues. Because of their lower tusks, however, half-orcs speak Common with difficulty, slurring words together. To compensate, many choose to speak slowly when talking in Common, but this only reinforces the stereotype that half-orcs are slow and stupid.

Few half-orcs learn to read and write. Orcs have little use for literacy, and humans see no point in trying to teach half-orc children a capability they will probably never need and might be too dumb to learn.

Half-orcs who travel the world are often astounded to discover that most languages have written forms. Some eagerly study writing after they have seen it used, becoming proficient enough to read signs, maps, and menus and to write their own name and simple statements. Some half-orcs also learn other languages, astounding humans with their proficiency in Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, and Goblin. Few half-orcs master Elven, because that language is too musical for their harsh voices—and because half-orcs have little to say to elves anyway.

HALF-ORC SETTLEMENTS

Half-orcs, when they do settle down, usually find themselves either in human towns or in orc villages. Most other races do not accept their presence. Even if a half-orc gains acceptance from a halfling or an elf or a dwarf, the friend's family and neighbors often will not share this feeling. Many half-orcs avoid the problem altogether by making their homes in forests or on mountaintops, well away from other folk. They hunt, fish, and farm for their food, trekking into the nearest village infrequently for supplies and news.

Half-orcs often account for a small percentage of the population in a large human city. Humans are the only major race, aside from orcs, that accepts half-orcs at all,

and residents of large cities are more tolerant of different attitudes and appearances than those who live in small towns. In a city, a half-orc can lose himself in the crowd, and he may not even be the largest, strongest, and most brutish person around. Cities also provide excellent employment opportunities, and half-orcs in urban environments have little trouble finding jobs as bodyguards, bouncers, laborers, or mercenaries.

CREATING HALF-ORC CHARACTERS

Half-orcs are both extremely easy and extremely hard to play. On one hand, most half-orcs are have uncomplicated character hooks: They're big, strong, active, and not too bright. Half-orcs are also individuals without a racial history or racial culture to guide their behavior. That means you can decide from scratch what your half-orc character is like, how he acts, where he is from, and what he wants out of life.

On the other hand, half-orc characters are difficult to portray because other people assume they are stupid, ingracious, and just as bloodthirsty as their orc relatives. Overcoming those stereotypes is a challenge, both when other player characters are involved and when interacting with NPCs. Some villages and towns won't allow half-orcs to enter, though they'll happily welcome dwarves, elves, and gnomes. Restaurants will close rather than serve a half-orc, and inns become strangely full whenever he wants a room. What's worse, his human family thinks he's too like an orc, and his orc kin say he's too human. Half-orcs just can't win.

Since physical prowess and strength come naturally to half-orc characters, you should use these traits to their fullest advantage—while balancing them with other attributes. No one expects a half-orc to be fast on his feet, so a high Dexterity can give you an edge in combat. Since everyone assumes such a character is stupid, give your half-orc a high Intelligence or Wisdom, and equip him with skills such as Listen and Sense Motive. Your half-orc will learn things no one else does, just because no one realizes he can understand them. Making the character a rogue or a spellcaster is another fun way to play against type—and it's easy for your half-orc to conceal his true class. If a half-orc is carrying a club, everyone who sees him assumes he's a fighter or a barbarian.

HALF-ORCS AS CHARACTERS

Half-orcs are best suited for the barbarian class, in which they can make the most of their strength and size. But being strong and tough is rarely a drawback, and half-orcs as a race are more versatile than most folk realize.

Barbarian: This is the most common class for half-orcs, partially due to their strength and partially because of their upbringing. Half-orcs raised by orcs often become barbarians after leaving home.

Bard: This is probably the most difficult class for half-orcs to succeed in—their low Charisma puts them at a disadvantage, as does their brutish appearance. However, a successful half-orc bard would certainly make people sit up and take notice, and his rarity would intrigue customers and patrons.

Cleric: Half-orc clerics usually worship Gruumsh or one of the more physical-oriented gods, such as Kord. They concentrate on spells that enhance strength and endurance, and anything that aids them in battle. Half-orc clerics who fight undead are rare because of the half-orc's disadvantage in Charisma. Whatever their religion, half-orc clerics preach that hardships are tests that only the faithful can pass.

Druid: Since half-orcs live away from other people, they can appreciate nature. That trait makes them decent candidates for the druid class. They may also know a lot about local flora and fauna, since they live by gathering food themselves.

Fighter: This is the second most popular class for half-orcs, since their natural strength works well in concert with a fighter's weapon training in weapons. Half-orc fighters tend toward selecting Cleave and other Strength-based feats.

Monk: At first glance, this race–class combination might seem ridiculous: a half-orc monk? But monks focus on the betterment of the individual, and on being self-sufficient, both of which fit the half-orc's situation. And, since most

half-orcs have had hard lives, the discipline of the monk's path comes naturally to them.

Paladin: Half-orc paladins are rare, both because half-orcs dislike rules and because most gods would never consider them worthy of such favor. Heironeous considers each applicant as an individual, however, and has accepted half-orc paladin worshipers on many occasions. After all, they can fight, and they could become powerful symbols of order if trained properly.

Ranger: Half-orcs spend much of their time alone in the wild, hunting and tracking, so ranger is a natural class choice for them. The class is also more versatile than the fighter class—no one expects a half-orc to have access to magic, especially if he's carrying a sword. Half-orc rangers are more likely to take the two-weapon fighting combat style than the archery combat style, because they can put their strength to greater use in melee.

Rogue: No one would suppose a half-orc to be a rogue, right? But why not? They are big and strong, but not as clumsy as many folk assume—and their very size and appearance make them the last ones anyone would suspect of being thieves. The rogue's skill points nicely offset the half-orc's lack of intelligence, while a half-orc's strength combined with the rogue's sneak attack class feature can deliver a killing blow.

Sorcerer: Half-orcs do not make good sorcerers. The class depends on Charisma to succeed, and that is typically a half-orc's weakest ability. However, such characters are not unheard of, and at low levels the half-orc's natural strength helps make up for the sorcerer's lack of combat skill.

Wizard: Many half-orcs can barely read or write, but for those who can, this class is an interesting career choice. Who would ever suppose that a half-orc could be a wizard? Backed by a half-orc's strength, a wizard's quarterstaff becomes an effective weapon.

SPECIAL HALF-ORC OPTIONS

A half-orc character qualifies for some feats and prestige classes unavailable to PCs of other races (or most other races), as described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this book.

Feats: Channeled Rage, Diverse Background, Fearless Destiny, Heroic Destiny, Human Heritage, Menacing Demeanor, Protected Destiny.

Prestige Classes: Menacing brute, outcast champion.

Illus. by J. Nelson

This young half-orc takes easily, and willingly, to the pursuit of a fighting career

Illus. by C. Lukacs

The illumians are a race created by sorcery. Through painstaking ritual, they have developed a mystical connection to the magic runes that make up their alphabet. Glowing sigils surround them, granting the power of an eldritch language made flesh.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Bloodwing Zhaolei wakes before dawn to the tinkling of chimes in the Bloodwing fortress-monastery. After a half-hour of calisthenics in her small, stone room, she dons her personal robes, then a white mantle denoting her junior status within her cabal.

She walks down the hallway to the common room to share a meal of porridge, bread, and tea with other junior members of the cabal. According to their custom, the initiates eat in silence in the dim chamber, the only light that produced by their slowly rotating sigils.

Pausing after her last sip of tea, Zhaolei briefly meditates on her schedule for the day. Then she reports to the library, where she continues her translation of *The Codicils of Vyurek the Elder* from Illumian to Elven. Carefully transcribing, Zhaolei intentionally writes slowly, repeating each word over and over in her mind. She suspects that Bloodwing Thotho, the librarian, will test her on the book when she's finished translating it. After receiving poor marks for "reading retention" last season, she's more determined than ever before to excel at her studies.

Zhaolei is almost done with a chapter when the chimes ring again. She walks quickly to the courtyard, eager to get her hands on one of the better swords for weapons training. Along the way she mentally rehearses the quick-draw drill she's been practicing for the last two weeks. Today is her last day to practice before the weapon master, Bloodwing Rulya, administers a series of sword exams. Zhaolei draws her sword over and over again, willing her arm to remain steady so that the sword tip doesn't quiver in the slightest. Rulya is a stickler for "a calm weapon."

After precisely 101 repetitions of the training exercise, Zhaolei and the other students in her weapons class snack on fruit and nuts in the courtyard of the cabal's fortress. Unlike breakfast, lunch is intended to be a social affair. Zhaolei seeks out Bloodwing Kurret, who finished a translation of the *Codicils* last year. After patiently waiting for him to finish a conversation about sword sharpening, Zhaolei asks him about the *Codicils*—and the test she's likely to face when her translation is complete.

"You know it would be unfair to help you," Kurret says. "And it's bold of you to ask. When I was in your position, I was too busy memorizing Galgan's commentaries on the *Codicils* to pester older students."

Zhaolei bows politely and retreats. Munching on a plum, she wonders whether Kurret was dropping a hint, intentionally misleading her, or simply careless when he mentioned the sage Galgan. Hints and misdirection are both possible from Kurret, but a careless comment would be out of character for any Bloodwing.

After lunch, the students pair off for wooden sword duels. The clatter of dull blades fills the air for the prescribed 1-minute cycles, after which the students rotate to face a new foe. Zhaolei wins eight and loses nine. *Perhaps I've been concentrating on technique and neglecting strategy,* she thinks. *I need to watch my fellow students more closely and remember any weak points.*

Tired from practice (not to mention sore from exactly nine bruises), Zhaolei returns to her bedchamber for an hour of private meditation. The chimes ring again, and Zhaolei quickly discards her white mantle and outer robe for a simple gray frock. Then she shuffles to the front hall of the fortress for collective labor.

While the work is usually menial (and mind-numbingly boring), Zhaolei looks forward to collective labor. It's the only time of day when she sees the senior members of the cabal, as well as the cabal's children. The cabal's housematron, Bloodwing Haitao, assigns groups to sweeping, cooking, wood gathering, and the countless tasks that draw no attention—until they're left undone. Haitao reminds all present to "contemplate the collective will of the cabal," and Zhaolei smiles, deciding that Haitao has mastered the most roundabout way of telling people to be quiet that she's ever heard.

Despite Haitao's admonitions, Zhaolei has a pleasant conversation with the members of her work detail as she mops the hallway floors, even if the conversation is punctuated with frequent, backbreaking trips to the cabal's well. Haitao mixes junior and senior members of the cabal in the work details, so Zhaolei gets a glimpse into the cabal's other circles. This evening, two senior members are talking about a trip into the forest that surrounds the cabal fortress. *Maybe someday I'll learn enough herb-lore and nature-magic to run through the forest.* Zhaolei sees the forest beyond the cabal's walls only when a work detail takes her to the upper-floor domiciles, which have small, barred windows. *I wonder if the forest is really as dangerous as they say.*

The low chimes of the dinner bell ring, and the members of Zhaolei's work detail quickly stow their mops and shed their work robes before filing into dinner. As with breakfast, dinner is intended to be a meditative event. Unlike breakfast, dinner is hot, spicy, and satisfying. Savoring a baked apple, Zhaolei meditates on the likelihood that she'll pick apples herself one day.

After dinner, Zhaolei has "free" time, which according to the cabal's rules means she can study in the library or do calisthenics. Zhaolei makes a beeline for the library shelf where Galgan's *Commentaries on Vyurek* sits. She reads Galgan until her eyelids droop, then forces herself to page through a second book she's selected: *My Time Among the Druids* by Bloodwing Uuthan.

I'll bet druids eat apples in the forest every day, muses Zhaolei as she shuffles off to bed.

DESCRIPTION

Unlike the previous two chapters, which covered races previously described in the *Player's Handbook,* this chapter gives a full description of a new race known as illumians, their racial traits, and all other information necessary for creating illumian characters.

OVERVIEW

Illumians are contemplative humanoids, driven and ambitious, taught from an early age to master every field of study.

Personality: Illumians tend to be somewhat cautious, choosing to study a situation and develop a plan before acting.

They're also proud of their heritage as illumians, extolling the virtues of illumians in general and their cabal in particular for anyone who'll listen.

Physical Description: Illumians look like the humans who first learned the Ritual of Words Made Flesh—pale-skinned and somewhat taller than average. More than half of all illumians are bald, while the rest have blond or red hair. Facial hair is almost unheard of.

Of course, their most significant features are the luminous sigils that float above their heads, endlessly circling. These sigils are described in detail below.

Illumians—even poor ones—favor the most expensive dress they can afford, with fine embroidery, long robes and capes, and multiple layers. Their bulky dress makes illumians look bigger and more muscular than they actually are. Illumians have a great distaste for dirt and take pains to keep their clothes clean, even in a wilderness or dungeon setting.

Elaborate facial makeup is also common among illumians, particularly older ones who have already mated for their cabal. While some humans wear makeup to make themselves appear more attractive, illumians wear it for the opposite reason: to keep others at a distance. The more garish and outlandish an individual's makeup, the more likely it is that she wishes to be left alone.

Relations: Illumians regard humans as a brother race, but remain somewhat distant—after all, the illumians left pure humanity behind when they undertook the Ritual of the Word Made Flesh. Elves are admired for their long life spans, love of learning, and facility with magic, while

dwarves are regarded as consummate craftsfolk but with little else to offer. Illumians confronted with gnomes and halflings sometimes let a bit of paternalism seep through their efforts to be polite, subconsciously treating the small folk like children.

Whenever they can, illumians seek common ground with species that demonstrate a love of learning, such as dragons and outsiders. Conversely, illumians have regarded the githyanki as implacable enemies ever since the githyanki discovered and sacked the illumians' High Library on the Astral Plane. Except for those of the Gravewhisper cabals (described below), illumians abhor undead.

Alignment: The cabals that form the backbone of illumian society maintain codes of honor they expect members to follow, so illumians have a tendency toward lawful alignments. Gibber cabals (described below) seek power in the disorder of invented words, and so have more chaotic tendencies.

Illumian Lands: Illumians usually form a small community far away from civilization, where they are free to make their plans without outside interference. Some cabals (or clusters of allied cabals) occupy buildings or neighborhoods in major human cities, where eventually their appearance ceases to arouse particular curiosity. Many cabals have access to a magic portal that whisks illumians to the Shadow City of Elirhondas, a teeming metropolis in which illumians make up the overwhelming majority of the population.

Religion: Illumian clerics mainly worship Tarmuid, the First Speaker, who invented the Ritual of the Word Made Flesh and uttered the words that created the illumians centuries ago. Since then, a few other illumians—mostly those who participated in the very first Ritual of the Word Made Flesh—have ascended to godhood by making a final utterance (described below). Tarmuid and these illumian deities are described in The Illumian Pantheon, later in this chapter.

Language: Illumians speak the language that Tarmuid discovered (or invented, according to some cabals), the magical language that powered the ritual that created the first illumians. Even infants can speak Illumian—slowly and poorly—within a few days of birth. Nonillumians don't have an instinctive grasp of the language and find it very hard to learn. Because they aren't magically infused with the language the way illumians are, other speakers of Illumian receive no power from the hundreds of sigils that form the language's alphabet.

Names: Illumian personal names are almost always two or three syllables long, chosen from syllables that have a positive connotation (the paragraphs below contain a list of good choices for an illumian PC). Illumians also take the name of their cabal as their own. Because the cabals help define an illumian's place in the world, illumians give their cabal name first, followed by their personal name. When speaking in Common, illumians usually translate their cabal name but leave their personal name in Illumian because it most likely doesn't have an exact match in Common.

Male Names: Abthek, Byerek, Duensel, Ghautar, Hautra, Iarmid, Kaulesh, Kyrish, Ooleg, Shelkau, Vyurek, Yeylea.

Female Names: Andrin, Chalaum, Eallie, Fraona, Nuele, Prekish, Querik, Rhealoo, Sreiska, Woothal, Xiroth, Zhaolei.

Cabal Names: Blackpennant, Bloodwing, Driftcloud, Duskwatcher, Frostpeak, Rustdreamer, Stormwind.

Adventurers: Illumians travel to learn more about the surrounding world on behalf of their cabals, occasionally undertaking dangerous missions on behalf of their cabal leaders. A few illumians have been cast out of their cabals, but it's far more likely that an adventuring illumian left voluntarily, hoping to gain enough knowledge and power to attract other illumians and thereby found a new cabal. Illumians spend a number of their adolescent or young adult years wandering the world, dreaming of being the master at the center of a powerful illumian cabal.

ILLUMIAN RACIAL TRAITS

- Humanoid (human): Illumians are humanoid creatures with the human subtype.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, illumians have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Illumian base land speed is 30 feet.
- Luminous Sigils (Su): The sigils that orbit an illumian's head glow softly, providing illumination equal to that of a candle. Illumians can make their sigils disappear by concentrating for a moment (a standard action), but they don't receive the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by illumian words (see below) while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

  Luminous sigils (including power sigils; see below) are insubstantial and disappear into any matter they touch. An illumian's sigils remain present and in effect even when the illumian takes another form, unless she would lose her supernatural abilities as a result of the form change. An illumian wizard who casts a *polymorph* spell on herself retains her sigils, but an illumian who becomes a zombie loses them.
- Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Illumians are the physical embodiment of a magical language, so they interact strangely with symbol-based spells. This group includes all spells whose names contain the word glyph, rune, sigil, or symbol (such spells in the *Player's Handbook* include *explosive runes, glyph of warding, greater glyph of warding, sepia snake sigil*, and the various *symbol* spells). When an illumian encounters such magic, one of two things happens: Either the illumian's resonance overpowers the spell, or the foreign magic corrupts the mystical language that defines the illumian. Illumians have a –4 racial penalty on saving throws against these effects if

their level is less than the caster level of the spell. If an illumian's level equals or exceeds the spell's caster level, she is immune to the effect.

- Power Sigils (Su): In addition to the array of dimly glowing luminous sigils that orbits her head, a 1st-level illumian has a single brightly glowing power sigil that grants her certain bonuses (see below). A power sigil can be discerned from other sigils surrounding an illumian with a DC 10 Spot check, and identified with a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check.

  On attaining 2nd level in any class, an illumian gains a second different power sigil, and the bonus granted by each power sigil increases to +2. Depending on the combination of power sigils she chooses, an illumian gains one or more extra special abilities (see Illumian Words, below). The benefit of each power sigil is given below, along with the Common translation of each sigil's Illumian name.

  Aesh ("*vigor*"): +1 bonus on Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks.

  Hoon ("*life*"): +1 bonus on Wisdom checks, Constitution checks, and Wisdom- or Constitution-based skill checks.

  Krau ("*magic*"): +1 bonus to caster level for all spells and spell-like abilities (up to a maximum value equal to the illumian's character level).

  Naen ("*mind*"): +1 bonus on Intelligence checks and Intelligence-based skill checks.

  Uur ("*grace*"): +1 bonus on Dexterity checks and Dexterity-based skill checks.

  Vaul ("*soul*"): +1 bonus on Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks.
- Illumian Words (Su): Each combination of two power sigils' names makes an Illumian word of great power, and thus grants extra abilities to a character who possesses those two power sigils. The benefit of each word of power is described below.

  Aeshkrau: The illumian can use her Strength score to determine the bonus spells she gains for a high ability score, instead of the normal ability score used by her class to determine this feature. If she has more than one spellcasting class, she may use her Strength score in place of any or all of the ability scores used by those classes for this purpose.

  Aeshoon: Twice per day, the illumian can spend a turn or rebuke attempt as a swift action to gain a bonus on weapon damage rolls equal to her Wisdom bonus. This effect lasts until the beginning of her next turn, and it applies only to weapons with which she has selected the Weapon Focus feat.

  Aeshuur: When the illumian deals damage to a target with a sneak attack or a critical hit, she gains a +2 dodge bonus to her AC against that target until the beginning of her next turn.

  Hoonkrau: The illumian can spend a turn undead attempt as a swift action to add 1d8 points to the damage healed by any *cure* spell she casts before the end of her next turn, or a rebuke undead attempt as a swift action to add 1d8 points to the damage dealt by any *inflict* spell she casts before the end of her next turn. The illumian may use this ability twice per day.

  Hoonvaul: Twice per day, the illumian can expend a spell slot (but not a slot holding a prepared spell) as a swift action to gain a bonus equal to the spell's level on turning checks, turning damage rolls, and on attack and damage rolls when making a smite attack. This effect lasts until the beginning of the illumian's next turn.

  Naenaesh: During the time when the illumian prepares spells, she can choose to leave up to two spell slots unfilled to gain the ability to cast any other prepared spell (or spells) of the same level as if it had been prepared with the Still Spell feat. This effect lasts until the next time the illumian prepares spells. She cannot fill the vacant spell slot (or slots) until the next time she prepares spells.

  Naenhoon: Twice per day, the illumian can spend one or more turn or rebuke undead attempts as a swift action to add a metamagic effect to a spell she is casting, with

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: ILLUMIAN POWER SIGILS

While illumian power sigils are useful to most characters, multiclass characters gain the maximum benefit from Illumian words. This is intentional—illumians enjoy multiclassing, and such pursuits are common among their people.

The DM should resist the temptation to simply add more power sigils without carefully considering the ramifications. A finite number of illumian power sigils exist. This limits the number of Illumian words in the game, which prevents the number of options available to illumian characters from becoming overwhelming. Adding even one power sigil to the list adds six new combinations, and dramatically increases the number of Illumian words available to illumians with two power sigils.

If you choose to adjust the selection of power sigils available in your game, do so with care. In general, the power sigils don't add directly to a single-class character's combat prowess. A power sigil that grants a bonus on attack or damage rolls, for instance, would not be a good addition. Not only would it benefit single-class characters as much as or more than multiclassed characters, its power level makes it much more attractive than any of the other power sigils. Even the *krau* power sigil only improves the caster level of a multiclass spellcaster or a character whose caster level isn't already equal to his character level (such as a paladin or ranger), and thus isn't attractive to single-class spellcasters.

Any new Illumian words you create should reward multiclass characters more than single-class characters.

no effect on the spell's casting time or effective level. She must have the metamagic feat whose effect she wants to apply. The illumian must expend a number of turn or rebuke undead attempts equal to the normal level adjustment of the metamagic feat (for example, it costs two turn or rebuke attempts to apply an Empower Spell effect). If she chooses to apply the Heighten Spell effect, it costs her one turn attempt per level that she heightens the spell, up to a maximum of 9th level.

Naenkrau: During the time when the illumian prepares spells, she can choose to leave up to two spell slots unfilled to add +1 to the save DCs of all her other spells of that level (including spells from different classes). If she leaves two spell slots unfilled, they must be at different spell levels. This effect lasts until the next time the illumian prepares spells. She cannot fill the vacant spell slot (or slots) until the next time she prepares spells.

Uurhoon: Twice per day, the illumian can expend a spell slot (but not a slot holding a prepared spell) as a swift action to gain an insight bonus equal to her Wisdom bonus on Reflex saves and her Dexterity bonus on caster level checks to overcome spell resistance. This effect lasts for 1 minute per level of the spell slot expended.

Uurkrau: The illumian can use her Dexterity score to determine the bonus spells she gains for a high ability score, instead of the normal ability score used by her class to determine this feature. If she has more than one spellcasting class, she may use her Dexterity score in place of any or all of the ability scores used by her classes for this purpose.

Uurnaen: During the time when the illumian prepares spells, she can choose to leave a 1st-level or 2nd-level spell slot unfilled to add an insight bonus equal to the spell slot's level on attack rolls when making an unarmed strike or a sneak attack. This effect lasts until the next time the illumian prepares spells. She cannot fill the vacant spell slot until the next time she prepares spells.

Vaulaesh: Twice per day, the illumian can expend a spell slot (but not a slot holding a prepared spell) as a swift action to gain an insight bonus equal to the spell's level to AC and on weapon damage rolls. This effect lasts until the beginning of the illumian's next turn, and the damage bonus applies only to weapons with which she has selected the Weapon Focus feat.

Vaulkrau: Twice per day, the illumian can expend a spell slot (but not a slot holding a prepared spell) as an immediate action to gain an insight bonus equal to the spell's level on the next saving throw she makes before the start of her next turn.

Vaulnaen: Twice per day, the illumian can use a spell slot (but not a slot holding a prepared spell) to spontaneously cast any of her prepared spells of the same spell level. For example, a 3rd-level bard/1st-level wizard who had prepared *burning hands* as a wizard spell could use one of her 1st-level bard spell slots to cast *burning hands*. The spell is cast using the caster level at which it is prepared (the bard/wizard in the above example would cast *burning hands* as a 1st-level caster).

Vauluur: The illumian may expend a spell slot (but not a prepared spell) as a swift action to add 1d6 per spell level to her unarmed strike damage rolls and her sneak attack damage rolls. This effect lasts until the beginning of her next turn, and she may use it twice per day.

- Final Utterance (Ex): When an illumian dies, her body releases the stored Illumian language within it. For 1 round per Hit Die of the illumian, anyone within earshot hears ululating Illumian syllables—usually gibberish, but occasionally a prophetic phrase or a final curse on the illumian's enemies. The illumian's body need not remain intact for the final utterance to occur. Even if an illumian succumbs to a *disintegrate* spell, her disembodied voice still utters strange gibberish for several rounds.
- +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the shadow descriptor: The illumians' magical heritage is tied to the Plane of Shadow.
- Superior Literacy: Illumians are always literate, regardless of their character class. Speak Language is always a class skill for illumians, regardless of class.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Illumian. Bonus Languages: Any except for secret languages (such as Druidic). Illumians love languages and travel far and wide to learn new languages from other races.
- Favored Class: Any. When determining whether a multiclass illumian takes an experience point penalty, her highest-level class does not count. (See XP for Multiclass Characters, page 60 of the *Player's Handbook*.) Illumians hold versatility in high esteem, and most members of the race are multiclass characters. Furthermore, illumian paladins and monks can leave those classes and return to them without penalty.

Table 3–1: Random Starting Ages

Race	Adulthood	Simple[1]	Moderate[2]	Complex[3]
Illumian	20 years	+2d4	+3d6	+4d6

1 Simple classes are barbarian, rogue, and sorcerer.
2 Moderate classes are bard, fighter, paladin, and ranger.
3 Complex classes are cleric, druid, monk, and wizard.

Table 3–2: Aging Effects

Race	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Illumian	50 years	75 years	100 years	+4d20

Table 3–3: Random Starting Height and Weight

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Illumian, male	4′ 11″	+2d10	110 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Illumian, female	4′ 6″	+2d10	80 lb.	× (2d4) lb.

PSYCHOLOGY

Illumians are driven by the need to understand a given situation, then master it. An illumian wants to be the one who finds the flaw in the blackguard's strategy, or who casts the perfect spell to destroy the lich forever. Illumians would rather lose a fight to a superior foe than defeat a less capable enemy—especially if they were able to demonstrate grit and brains in the losing effort. Winning and losing don't matter, but mastery does (and mastery and victory tend to go hand in hand).

Of course, illumians are realistic enough to recognize that no individual can master everything. Accordingly, illumians settle for demonstrating competence at tasks beyond their "true calling." An illumian fighter, for example, might seek mastery of the dire flail, but he'll take enough ranks in Ride to call himself a competent equestrian.

The flip side to an illumian's drive for mastery is his predilection for variety. Once an illumian is satisfied with his level of competence or mastery in a specific area, he'll enthusiastically move on to something new. This craving for variety eventually pushes illumians beyond the walls of their cabal's stronghold. Illumians often progress in completely different fields, which is why mid- to high-level illumians are so often multiclass characters. An illumian paladin, for example, might have become satisfied with his martial prowess and now seeks expertise in the shadow arts of stealth and subterfuge by taking a level or two in the rogue class.

Roleplaying Application: If you're playing an illumian character, keep in mind that an illumian is driven to study a situation before jumping in. Your character is more likely to ready actions in combat and even delay to achieve a better sense of how a fight is shaping up before he or she acts.

An illumian character is eager to demonstrate his mastery. If your character is confident of his abilities, he might take extra risks to win a fight or contest in spectacular fashion. In a sword duel, he might try to disarm a wounded foe and extract a surrender rather than ending the fight as soon as possible. He'll be tempted to use *flesh to stone* when *hold person* would be just as effective. But when his life and his comrades are endangered, he won't engage in wasteful displays of power.

ILLUMIAN PLOTTERS

The drive for mastery among illumians manifests itself in another way: a complex, hierarchical social structure. In any group, an illumian is acutely aware of her position in the hierarchy. Even more than humans, illumians have an instinctive drive to be at the top of their hierarchy. Vying for social position is entirely natural to illumians, and they are puzzled by social structures that limit advancement by birth, gender, race, or other immutable characteristics. Until they've studied the matter, illumians might have a hard time understanding why a serf can't become a lord or why the elderly king retains his crown when his sons are clearly more capable rulers.

When the social structure in question is populated entirely by illumians (as is the case in most illumian cabals), the competition for social status can grow intense, with each illumian plotting her own rise to power while guarding her position against the predations of rivals. But because the drive for mastery is so instinctive to illumians, they rarely take the ebb and flow of political fortunes within a cabal personally. Illumians are pragmatic enough to realize that within their cabal, today's rival may be tomorrow's ally. They don't bear grudges unless the political machinations of their fellows have unusually cruel or disruptive results.

Illumians love language and are intensely social, eagerly engaging friend and stranger alike in conversation. But just as with other activities, an illumian isn't conversing simply for the sake of comradeship. He's assessing his relative position in the social hierarchy, trying to learn as much as he can about his conversation partner, and looking for opportunities to demonstrate his mastery of a conversation. Perceptive conversationalists who spend time talking to illumians feel as if their every word is being scrutinized. They sense that they're being "sized up" even in casual conversation, as if the illumian is looking for potential allies and possible rivals.

Roleplaying Application: The illumian tendency to foment plots and intrigues isn't an excuse to spread discord within your character's party or around the gaming table. But an illumian character probably takes an interest in who's running the kingdom—and an intense interest in who is the power behind the throne. An illumian character tends to be the first to suspect a double-cross from patrons or allies, and a particularly amoral illumian is probably the first character to suggest a double-cross if it'll help the group.

THE ILLUMIAN LIFE

The outside world sees illumians as power-obsessed schemers who wall themselves off in isolated strongholds—and there's certainly an element of truth behind the stereotype. But what nonillumians don't realize is that illumians wouldn't want it any other way. Illumians relish the opportunity to wield power from behind the scenes, because doing so demonstrates their mastery while employing the studied caution that is an illumian trademark.

Illumians live in isolated strongholds known as cabals. Each cabal forms a support and training network for the machinations of the senior leadership. Equal parts fortress, monastery, college, and way station, the cabal is the center of illumian life. Almost all illumians grow up within the cabal's walls, learn a profession from the cabal's instructors, and strive to earn a seat at the "Black Table" where the cabal's leaders rule.

The day-to-day life of an illumian is dictated by the needs of the cabal. Younger illumians spend their time in training, while their elders act on orders from the Black Table. Depending on a particular illumian's station and abilities, the Black Table's directive could be anything from "Operate the cabal's pottery kiln" to "Summon a powerful elemental and bind it to the cabal's service" to "Assassinate the mayor of the human town to the north."

While an illumian's daily duties vary widely, it's possible to make a few generalizations about life within the walls of a cabal.

LEISURE

Illumians find the concept of leisure for its own sake a foreign notion. They teach their children from birth that spare time is wasteful—calisthenics or meditation is an acceptable substitute if they can't find something more productive to accomplish. An illumian is never happier than when she's putting her skills and powers on the line in a bid for mastery. Dispelling a rival's protective spells, stealing a lorebook from a dragon's hoard, or completely beheading a hydra—that's fun for an illumian.

But while illumians spurn leisure, they crave variety in their studies and exercises. Illumians tend to be patient and goal-oriented, discounting simple pleasures such as a streetside puppet show or a tankard of ale at the local tavern. They'd genuinely rather be learning a southern dialect of Draconic, resharpening their crossbow bolts, or observing the patrol routines of the city guard.

This doesn't mean that illumians are killjoys. A traveling illumian might find a late-night chess opponent in an elf party member, but he would reject the very idea that chess counts as leisure, instead regarding the game as training in strategic thinking and anticipation of an opponent's future actions. Likewise, an illumian might regard a card game as an exercise in memorization and probability math. Others accuse illumians of taking the fun out of everyday events, but they derive a great degree of satisfaction from turning trivial activities into useful training.

Roleplaying Application: When everyone else's character is resting and relaxing, think about how your illumian is spending her time. She volunteers for every menial task, as long as it supports the overall party effort. She likes taking night watch, doesn't mind digging fortifications, and finds copying ancient maps a worthy activity. Your character also favors "useful" activities rather than trivial ones. Why spend a night lounging in the common room of the inn, she'll ask her comrades, when they could be knitting together new links for a suit of chainmail?

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Illumians appreciate and savor life's luxuries—from the taste of spicy food to the poetry of an ancient epic to the glitter of a jeweled pendant—but their enjoyment of these pleasures is ancillary to a more prosaic purpose. An illumian cares more about the nourishment of the food, the magic lore embedded within the epic poem, and the portable wealth of the pendant.

Illumians create art for three reasons: to inspire their fellows, to pass along information, and to show off their skill as artists.

Stylistically, illumians favor a sort of idealized realism in their art. Portraiture is particularly common, whether in the form of a marble bust, an oil painting, or a chalk drawing in a sketchbook or historical tome. Many illumian cabals have a "hall of revered destinies" in their fortresses, full of marble busts and oil paintings of champions and historical figures important to the cabal.

Table 3–4: Illumian Art Objects

d%	Value	Examples
01–10	1d10×10 gp	Wooden bowl with monogram carvings, ivory statuette of Tarmuid, silver skull earrings
11–25	3d6×10 gp	Embroidered wool or cotton robe, illuminated regional map, engraved glass chalice
26–40	1d6×100 gp	Oil paint landscape, owl pendant with pearl eyes, jade studded torc
41–50	1d10×100 gp	Illuminated single-folio manuscript, gold bracer, clamshell purse with inlaid mother-of-pearl
51–60	2d6×100 gp	Embroidered satin robe, wolf mask with pearl teeth, burnished copper hairbrush
61–70	3d6×100 gp	Jade serpent necklace, gloves woven with moonsilver thread
71–80	4d6×100 gp	Oil paint portrait, embroidered silk robe, wavy-bladed dagger with sapphire in pommel
81–85	5d6×100 gp	Illuminated multiple-volume manuscript set, gold-gilded chalice with *permanent image* Illumian sigils floating above it, crystal monocle on fine platinum chain
86–90	1d4×1,000 gp	Oil paint battle scene, jade dragon mask, jewelry box carved to look like sleeping cat
91–95	1d6×1,000 gp	Embroidered spider silk robe, bejeweled gavel, opal-studded boots
96–99	2d4×1,000 gp	Oil paint group portrait in golden frame, set of black pearl bracelets, marble bust with *permanent image* Illumian sigils floating around it
100	2d6×1,000 gp	Illuminated encyclopedia set, dragon statuette covered in emeralds or rubies, diamond-studded vestments

The wall frescoes that commonly decorate a cabal's interior walls feature group portraits of illumians important to the cabal, as well as battle scenes that depict illumians

slaying monsters and defeating foes. Both the portraits and the battle scenes are highly posed, with the more important illumians occupying higher positions in the painting. Traditional illumian paintings never depict anyone looking down on the central illumian—their eyes are always lower than the sigils that surround the illumian's head.

Another stylistic conceit common in illumian art is the sigils themselves, which are an exception to the illumian tendency toward realism. Traditional illumian portraits don't show the actual sigils that float around the head of a particular illumian. Instead, the artist paints the name of the subject (in Illumian) where the sigils would ordinarily float. Sculptors employ a similar technique, but the limitations of the medium mean that they rely on illusion magic to create the floating names.

Even illumian jewelry and decorative arts follow the trend toward realism. Illumian handcrafts are intended to represent a specific creature or object: a necklace that looks like a serpent, a ruby pendant that looks like a drop of blood on an open palm, and so on. Embroidery and other decorations on clothes likewise depict real objects. The edge of a cloak, for example, likely bears an embroidered feather or vein pattern, not a simple stripe or abstract design.

Treasure: The following art objects are particularly demonstrative of illumian culture. They can replace or supplement treasure generated on Table 3–7, page 55 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

In addition, certain mundane items are more likely to appear in illumian treasure hoards. Masterwork artisan's tools take the form of a fine calligraphy kit, and a disguise kit (which includes a selection of rare cosmetics) is twice as likely to appear. Eliminate the climber's kit entry on Table 3–8, page 56 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and replace it with 59–68 Disguise kit (50 gp).

TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC

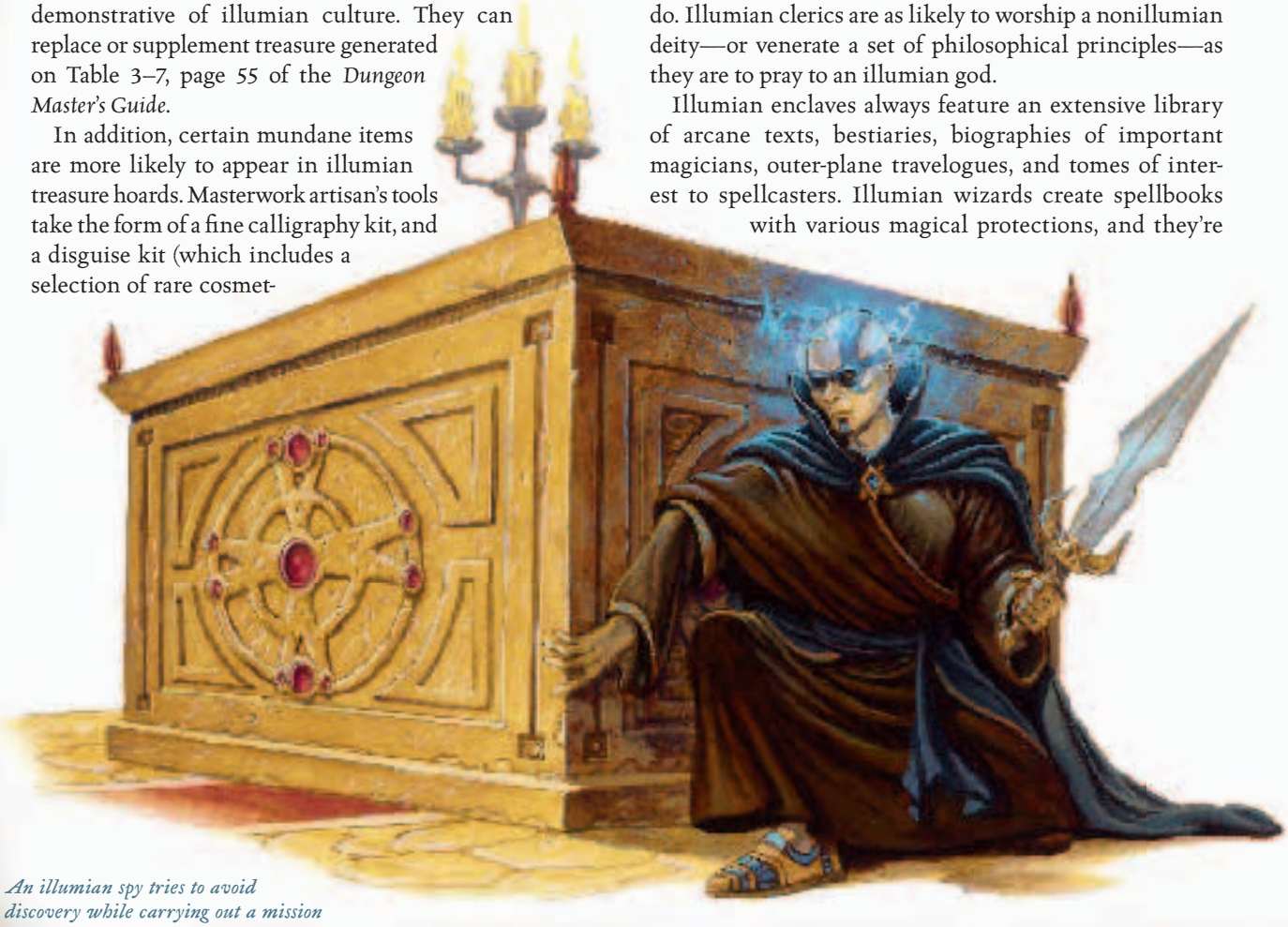
A magical ritual created the first illumians, and as a result the race has close ties to magic. Furthermore, the illumian facility for language and love of the written word nudges many of them into wizard training—at least as a sideline to their other pursuits.

Because illumians have such a strong magical heritage, they regard the study of such arts quite highly. An illumian who learns the greatest arcane secrets isn't just expanding the study of magic, but delving into the forces that created his race.

Diviner and illusionist wizards are particularly common among illumians, because those spells are so useful in an intrigue- and espionage-filled world. However, the race's most powerful wizards and sorcerers include a multitude of enchantment spells in their repertoires. The *power word* spells, above all enchantments, are regarded with particular awe by illumians.

Illumians are a young race, and their deities attained godhood only within the last few centuries. As a result, they don't show the same fervor for divine magic that humans do. Illumian clerics are as likely to worship a nonillumian deity—or venerate a set of philosophical principles—as they are to pray to an illumian god.

Illumian enclaves always feature an extensive library of arcane texts, bestiaries, biographies of important magicians, outer-plane travelogues, and tomes of interest to spellcasters. Illumian wizards create spellbooks with various magical protections, and they're



Illus. by F. Nelson

An illumian spy tries to avoid discovery while carrying out a mission

willing to trade a finely crafted spellbook for lore they don't possess.

Illumian enclaves show off the race's affinity for alphabets and languages in another way: Secure areas are guarded with *glyphs of warding, explosive runes,* or one of the *symbol* spells.

Many illumian enclaves also include a magic portal that leads to Elirhondas, the illumian city on the Plane of Shadow. Older illumian enclaves still maintain portals to the Astral Plane, where the illumians' Great Library once stood before the githyanki sacked it centuries ago.

ILLUMIANS AT WAR

When Tarmuid created the first illumians centuries ago, he instructed them to form cabals across the surface of the world—a directive the illumians took to heart. Illumians do not openly govern great cities or nations, although more than one monarch is under the secret influence or control of an illumian cabal. Illumian wars tend to be small-scale affairs involving a handful of cabals and less than a thousand illumians. But what they lack in epic grandeur, illumian battles make up for in subterfuge and ruthlessness.

Conflict among illumians occurs most commonly when two cabals find themselves working at cross-purposes and are unable to settle the issue diplomatically. Such "silent wars" begin with various dirty tricks, then gradually escalate into sabotage and assassination before culminating in an all-out assault on the fortress of one of the cabals. Illumians employ nonillumians as willing allies or uninformed catspaws, but in either case many of the casualties in a silent war aren't aware of the true nature of the battle.

For example, the Bloodwing cabal provides covert assistance to the church of St. Cuthbert in the duchy of Rossalia, while the Graypeak cabal works at infiltrating the Rossalian duke's court. When a schism develops between the duke and the church, the Bloodwing and Graypeak cabals find themselves at war with each other. The silent war begins when a Graypeak-controlled magistrate revokes citizenship rights for Bloodwing members openly working with the church of St. Cuthbert. The Bloodwings retaliate by revealing war crimes in the magistrate's past, forcing him to retire in disgrace. Though no one has fallen in battle and the two sides haven't spoken directly, silent war has been declared between the Bloodwings and Graypeaks.

The Graypeaks magically disrupt various religious rituals performed by St. Cuthbert's clerics, and the Bloodwings arm the bandits that live in the Rossalian backcountry. Although the rest of the duchy's citizens don't realize it, they've been drawn into the silent war as well: The bandit attacks draw away the duke's soldiers, and attendance dwindles at St. Cuthbert's temples. Then a team of Graypeak rogues steals a number of relics from the main St. Cuthbert cathedral, offering to return them if St. Cuthbert's clergy spurns its allegiance with the Bloodwing cabal. In response, the Graypeaks intentionally fail in an assassination attempt on the duke—but the assassin claims allegiance to the Bloodwings before killing himself.

As the Bloodwing-backed bandits menace the provincial capital, the Bloodwings make a deal—an expensive one—with the Northsun cabal to learn the location of the Graypeak cabal's fortress. The Bloodwings assault the fortress with every cabal member they can muster and every mercenary they can afford. The surprise attack is a success, most of the Graypeaks are killed or captured, and the Bloodwings recover the St. Cuthbert relics. The Bloodwings have won, but they are impoverished and exposed. The Northsun cabal knows firsthand how weak the Bloodwing cabal is, and now it prepares to expand its influence into Rossalia.

More rarely, an illumian cabal specifically targets another cabal—probably because the target has access to magic, lore, or a power source that the aggressor cabal wants. This activity is particularly common among ascension cabals and gauntlet cabals (described below), which tend to be more aggressive than other cabal types.

While illumians most often war among themselves, that isn't to say that every cabal is too paranoid to trust its fellows. Illumians are nothing if not pragmatic, and they recognize the value of reliable allies. When two cabals form an alliance, they usually exchange a number of members, jointly reveal secrets to one another, and intertwine their operations as much as possible. The closer the integration between two allied cabals, the less likely a betrayal will occur, because each cabal can quickly wreck the operations of the other.

Because illumians live in isolated fortresses and work their plots subtly, it's rare for a nonillumian army to make war on them. But if a cabal's palace plot goes awry, an angry king may mount a crusade and besiege the offending cabal's fortress. Illumians rarely meet such threats head on. They're more likely to foment revolution elsewhere to distract the king, or subvert the military leaders of the retribution force, often with magic, bribes, or promises of power.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The main social bond a typical illumian feels is to his or her cabal. Because the cabal raises its children together, bonds of family aren't nearly as important as they are to other races, but loyalty to the cabal is reinforced each and every day within the walls of the enclave.

A cabal consists of between one hundred and three hundred members. At any given time, more than 90 percent of a cabal's members live within the walls of the cabal's fortresslike enclave. There they study, raise their children, provide for the cabal's defense, and hatch plots for use in the outside world. Some illumians never leave the safety of their cabal's enclave, although most journey beyond its walls on missions from time to time.

CABAL STRUCTURE

Every cabal has its own structure, but most adhere in general terms to the structure of the first cabals established by Tarmuid when he created the illumian race and bade them spread across the world.

A council of elders known as the Black Table rules each cabal. They set broad objectives for each of the cabal's directorates: groups of several dozen illumians led by a director. The directors make the day-to-day decisions that keep the cabal running, from how to acquire provisions to which magical experiments to attempt.

A cabal might maintain directorates for defense, child rearing, magical research, espionage, internal loyalty, resource acquisition, and religion. The Black Table assigns all adult illumians to a directorate, and the director who leads that directorate assigns daily tasks that further the directorate's (and by extension the cabal's) goals.

Most cabals include a few nonillumian members, but these individuals rarely interact with the culture of the enclaves, instead acting as go-betweens or long-term spies in larger communities near the enclave. Members of other races find long-term residence among an illumian cabal to be stifling and monotonous. Short-term visits are another matter. Illumians tend to be hospitable (to invited guests, anyway) and accommodating, so those who have spent a week or two within the walls of an illumian enclave remark more on its orderly, peaceful nature than on the regimented, driven aspects of cabal life.

Black Table: The original cabals set nine seats at the Black Table, although the size of this ruling body can vary between six and twelve. Illumians and only illumians sit at the Black Table, and they do so for life. When a vacant seat opens at the Black Table, those who hold seats send an invitation (often but not always to a current director) to someone satisfactory to at least two-thirds of those currently seated at the Black Table.

By custom, the oldest illumian at the Black Table acts as a chairperson when the group meets, but each seat at the table has an equal say in the affairs of the cabal. The youngest illumian at the Black Table functions as a liaison between the ruling body and the rest of the community, issuing decrees and taking matters of import back to the Black Table for consideration. The other illumians who sit at the Black Table remain aloof from the rest of the cabal, preferring the company of their fellows and relishing the deference that other illumians show them.

Director: While those who sit at the Black Table can be aloof, mysterious figures, the directors are the hands-on leaders of the cabal and the most well-known (if not always the most popular) members. Cabals have between six and twelve directorates, each with dozens of members. Some directorates handle mundane tasks required to keep the community functioning, such as gathering food, maintaining the enclave, and caring for children. Other directorates handle more dangerous or difficult work: protecting the cabal from attack, keeping rivals under surveillance, or conducting magical experiments.

Directors serve at the pleasure of the Black Table, and they can be removed or reassigned by decree of the ruling body. In practice this happens only when a director's ethics or competence is called into question, because bad directors reflect poorly on the Black Table that appointed them. Directors suspected of wrongdoing or guilty of frequent failure are summoned before the Black Table long before the rest of the cabal knows of a leadership crisis.

The directors of large directorates empower subdirectors to make decisions on minor matters. For example, the director of a large cabal's defense directorate might have subdi-

Illus. by R. Spencer

The rulers of an illumian cabal take their responsibilities very seriously

rectors for day watch, night watch, magical defenses, strategic reserve, and training. Directors can hire and fire subdirectors as they wish.

Arbiter: Almost every cabal has a justice directorate, which in a small cabal consists of just one illumian: the arbiter. An arbiter is the judge and jury for crimes committed within the walls of the cabal's enclave—he or she orders arrests, questions witnesses, decides the case, and metes out punishment. If the cabal has more than a few dozen members, the justice directorate will be filled out with subarbiters who act as investigators and court officers for the arbiter. Subarbiters can make arrests, question suspects, and research illumian case law, but only the arbiter can render judgments.

Lorekeeper: Lore directorates are also common among illumian cabals. The director, referred to as the lorekeeper, functions as the head librarian for the cabal. Lorekeepers are expected to have great familiarity with the tomes in their keeping, and as a result lorekeepers are great sages and researchers. Many illumians aspire to the position of lorekeeper because of their love of language. In some cabals, the lorekeeper is more highly regarded than the illumians who sit at the Black Table.

Final Seed: From the earliest days of the illumian race, cabals have sent one or more capable members to live away from the enclave. These members, known as the final seed, have only one duty: rebuild the cabal should misfortune befall it. Final seeds are given copies of key illumian texts so they can start a new library if they have to, and they know how to contact friendly cabals for aid.

While illumians agree that being chosen as a final seed is a great honor—they are considered paragons of the cabal's ideals—many accept the honor only with great reluctance. A final seed must live apart from the safety of the cabal, visiting it only briefly. For illumians who have grown up in the structured environment of their enclaves, the outside world can be a lonely, bewildering place.

Roleplaying Application: Think about the position your character held in his or her cabal before he or she became an adventurer, and how he or she interacted with the cabal leadership. Perhaps you studied at the elbow of the loremaster, or maybe the arbiter investigated you for a crime you didn't commit.

CABAL TYPES

While all illumian cabals have the same overall structure (Black Table rulers instructing multiple directorates, all secreted away in an isolated enclave), they have varied goals. A cabal that communes with the spirits of its members' ancestors has different goals, and thus a different set of directorates, than a cabal devoted to protecting the Gamrakian Forest from further harm.

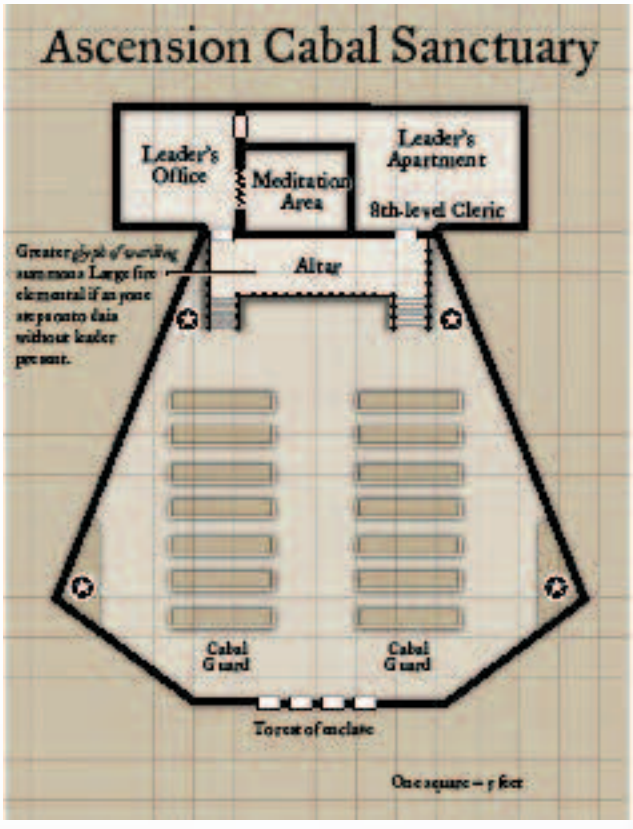
Ascension Cabals

Among the more mysterious types of cabals, ascension cabals exist to help one or more of their members achieve godhood. After Tarmuid created the Ritual of Words Made Flesh, he spent the rest of his mortal life trying to find a way for the Illumian language to express a divine state. He succeeded on his deathbed, and Tarmuid's final utterance has inspired other illumians to attempt the same feat. So far only a handful of illumians have successfully made final utterances (see Illumian Deities, below). Despite the low success rate, dozens of cabals across the multiverse feverishly conduct magical research in hopes of making a chosen illumian ready to attempt a final utterance and take the mantle of godhood.

Some ascension cabals are little more than cults of personality led by the most powerful illumian in residence. Others have made significant progress in unlocking the secrets of immortality and divine power.

Ascension cabals are often named after the illumian who seeks godhood with the cabal's help. Notable ascension cabals include Chelshae, Sons of Galadan, Zhukasti, Finalsteps, and Valak Ascendant.

Typical Directorates: Ascension cabals maintain the usual array of directorates, named in honor of the illumian deity-to-be. For example, the Sons of Galadan cabal refers to its intelligence directorate as The Eyes of Galadan, the defense directorate as the Fists of Galadan, and the resource directorate as the Bounty of Galadan. The personal retinue and servants of the would-be deity form a directorate unto themselves, and research-related directorates are as large as the cabal can manage.



Plots: Ascension cabals keep an eye on their neighbors—the better to protect the ascending illumian—but the majority of their plots involve tracking down lore about the final utterance and the ascension process. This means garnering lore from rival illumian cabals, whether ascension cabals or otherwise. A rival ascension cabal might possess previously unknown aspects of the final utterance, and cabals of different types might have clues to ascension in their histories and arcane tomes. Because cabals closely guard their knowledge, ascension cabals don't hesitate to resort to trickery, theft, or violence to acquire the information they seek.

Intracabal plotting is likewise fierce among ascension cabals. Mid- to high-level members of a cabal constantly jockey for position, try to curry favor with the deity-to-be, or even supplant the ascendant one's place on the path to divinity.

Enemies and Allies: More ascension cabals collapse from within than are destroyed from without. Either the infighting over the illumian chosen for ascendancy tears the cabal apart, or the cabal disperses after a candidate for godhood fails to make a proper final utterance. More rarely, an ascension cabal falls to an outside force such as another ascension cabal, a stronger cabal angered by too-aggressive lore seeking, or some magical or monstrous force the cabal unwittingly unleashed.

Ascension cabals have few external enemies, and likewise few allies. Ascension can bring little to an alliance other than a promise of a god's favor when ascension occurs, and that's a promise that few nonillumians take seriously. Particularly charismatic illumians in charge of an ascension cabal can sometimes found their own mystery cults and attract nonillumian worshipers.

Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in ascension cabals.

- An illumian cleric of Tarmuid who voluntarily leaves an ascension cabal, nagged by doubts over whether Tarmuid wants more illumians to achieve a divine state.
- An illumian fighter/wizard whose spirit was deemed not strong enough to achieve divinity, but whose older brother is a candidate for ascension.
- An illumian ranger/bard walking the earth, looking for clues about the final utterance on behalf of her ascension cabal.

Enclaves: The enclaves of ascension cabals look like temples or churches. They include sanctuaries, altars, and areas set aside for various ceremonies to honor the deity-in-waiting. The living quarters of the ascendant one are generally lavish, if for no other reason than the various directorates' competition to please the future deity.

Compared to other kinds of cabals, ascension cabals defend their enclaves lightly. They tend to possess less magic, lore, and riches than other cabals because they're so focused on achieving ascension. An ascension cabal enclave is relatively easy to find, but the outside world regards it as just another cult out in the wilderness.

Adventure Hook: After acquiring an important piece of lore for an ascension cabal, the PCs are invited to remain in the enclave while the ascendant one attempts a final utterance. But the final utterance fails, and the illumians blame the PCs, accusing them of providing altered manuscripts on orders from a rival ascension cabal. The illumians try to imprison the PCs within their enclave, and the PCs have to escape the clutches of illumians who blame them for the death of an illumian who was on the cusp of immortality.

Chain Cabals

Chain cabals are one of the two most common kinds of illumian cabal (gauntlet cabals are the other). Chain cabals pride themselves on their top-notch spy networks, which infiltrate nearby power centers such as governments, churches, and even monster lairs. Preservation of the status quo—with the cabal kept safe to observe everything—is the highest goal of a chain cabal.

Notable chain cabals include Bloodwing, Rustdreamer, Blackpennant, Thirdhorizon, and Kilnfire.

Typical Directorates: A chain cabal has a spy directorate for each power in its immediate region, usually named with an "Eyes on" construction. For example, the Bloodwing cabal is concerned with the machinations of the Sumberton nobility, the barghest-led Hellmaw tribe of goblinoids in the nearby forest, and a mysterious group of Tiamat-worshiping dragon cultists. The Bloodwings have an Eyes on Sumberton directorate, an Eyes on Hellmaw directorate, and an Eyes on Tiamat directorate.

Nearly all cabals include a directorate with a mandate to observe the outside world, but the "Eyes on" chain directorates are more aggressive than others. When the subject of its spying threatens the regional status quo, a directorate takes covert action—diplomatic maneuvering, sabotage, or even assassination—to keep the illumians safe and the existing power structure intact.

Chain cabals also maintain home directorates responsible for administering the enclave and education directorates that raise young illumians. Directorates devoted to the enclave's defense and research are present in nearly every chain cabal.

Plots: Chain cabals, acting through their "Eyes on" directorates, spend their efforts upholding the status quo. Usually, nonillumians don't even know of the cabal's existence—and if they did, they wouldn't necessarily be happy about it. For every chain cabal that keeps a placid province free of marauding monsters and political skullduggery, another chain cabal keeps a tyrant in power and her people impoverished. Chain cabals tend to be amoral, interested only in preserving existing conditions and keeping themselves unobtrusive and safe.

Intracabal plotting is particularly rife among chain cabals. Directorates responsible for spying on the outside world plot against each other as they compete for the cabal's resources

and the Black Table's attention. Some go so far as to plant agents in a rival directorate's ranks or sabotage crucial missions so the rival directorate will be embarrassed and politically weakened. The Black Table stamps out overheated rivalries when it finds out about them, unless the rivalry has escalated to the point where the members of the Black Table themselves take part.

Enemies and Allies: The "Eyes on" directorates prize agents who blend in with their targets, so chain cabals employ nonillumian allies—humanoids who live nearby or wield significant political power. Shapechangers such as doppelgangers are enticed with riches to join a chain cabal, or threatened with exposure if they spurn the cabal's advances.

A chain cabal tends to have few enemies because it's adept at remaining secret, or at least deflecting attention away from itself in a crisis. But by definition, the "Eyes on" directorates target the powerful forces near the cabal's enclave. If a government or other regional power discovers evidence of illumian spying—and survives the destabilizing missions the illumians are sure to launch—the chain cabal has created a motivated and powerful enemy.

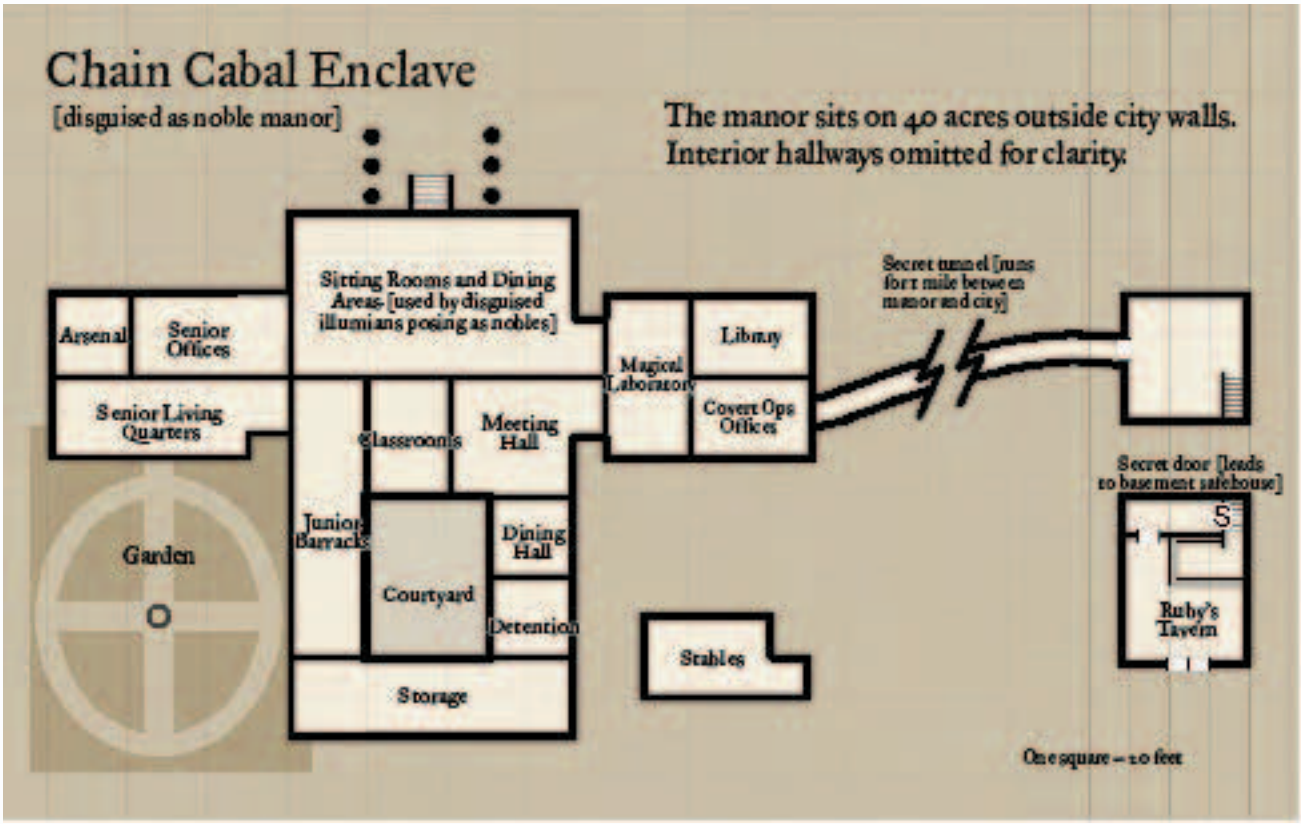
Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in chain cabals.

- An illumian rogue/sorcerer confident in his ability to infiltrate any place at any time.
- An illumian barbarian/druid who has spent so much time in deep cover as a tribal shaman that she wonders where her true loyalties lie.
- An illumian bard who travels the land, delivering and receiving secret messages for an "Eyes on" directorate's agents.

Enclaves: Because they expend their effort in covert actions, chain cabals have relatively modest enclaves, such as a well-guarded keep in the middle of nowhere. Some chain cabals build portals or *teleportation circles* that help their agents travel back and forth between their targets and the cabal's enclave.

Chain cabals also develop a network of safe houses and secret lairs where members can meet without returning to the main enclave. Such places are well hidden and heavily trapped against intruders. An abandoned siege tunnel, forgotten catacombs, and an unassuming flat above a merchant's shop are havens where the spies of a chain cabal might meet in secret.

Adventure Hook: Despite the best efforts of illumian agents, the king has granted land and title to three retired generals—land right next to the enclave of a chain cabal. The chain cabal turns to the PCs, asking them to infiltrate the inner circle of the new nobles. When they do, they learn that the retired generals were known both for their ambition and their ruthlessness. That's why the king granted them land as far from the capital as possible.



Eclipse Cabals

Nobody knows how many eclipse cabals exist, and that's the point. When Tarmuid, the creator of the illumian race, assembled the first cabals, he gave each a fragment of the Ritual of the Word Made Flesh and commanded the illumians to keep it safe. The eclipse cabals haven't expanded beyond Tarmuid's original mandate. They keep themselves as secret as possible, devoted utterly to protecting the part of the ritual in their possession. The perfect eclipse cabal disappears shortly after its founding, reappearing only when the illumian people need to reassemble the Ritual of Words Made Flesh.

They aren't well known, but Duskwatcher, Blacktower, Driftcloud, Rubytalon, and Evershade are all names of eclipse cabals.

Typical Directorates: Eclipse cabals maintain the same directorates as other cabals: administration, defense, education, and resources. If an eclipse cabal has an espionage directorate or a research directorate, it's usually rather small.

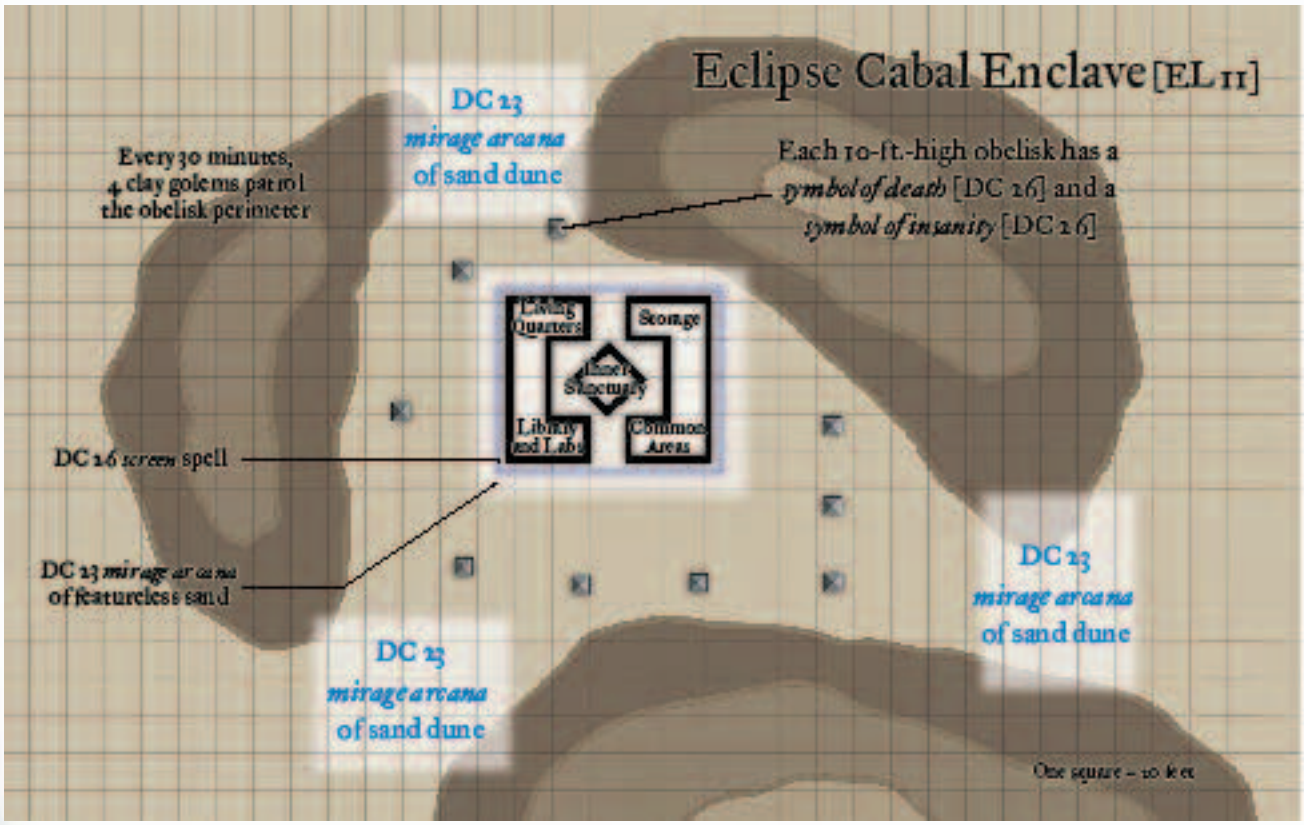
Plots: Eclipse cabals tend to be drawn into plots unwillingly, because all they care about is keeping their very existence a secret. A cabal might have to take action, however, against someone who learns its secret. Members of an eclipse cabal also might need to leave its enclave periodically to refresh its magical protections or acquire resources the enclave can't provide for itself. Finally, eclipse cabals are storehouses for items and lore from the earliest days of the illumians.

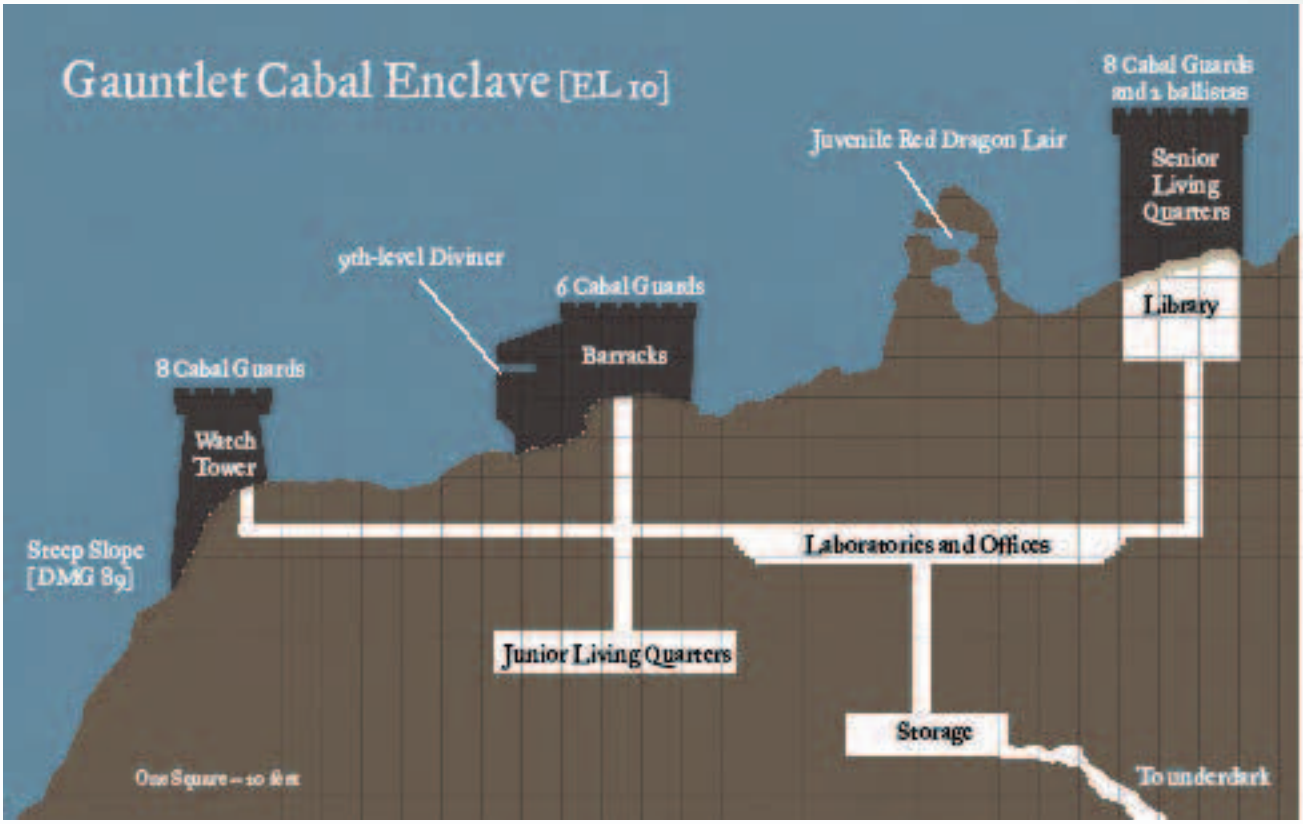
Enemies and Allies: An eclipse cabal spurns an alliance on the rare occasion when someone finds the cabal in the first place. No one is to be trusted beyond the cabal—not even well-meaning noneclipse illumians. Eclipse cabals rely almost exclusively on allies whose loyalty is beyond question, such as constructs and summoned creatures.

Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in eclipse cabals.

- An illumian rogue desperate to escape the boredom of the enclave and see the wider world firsthand.
- An illumian cleric/paladin on a quest to find a rare magical object to restore the fading illusions around his enclave.
- An illumian ranger/wizard exiled from an eclipse cabal for a crime she can't remember. The cabal wiped clean her memories so she couldn't reveal the location of the enclave.

Enclaves: Eclipse cabals have the most well-protected enclaves. They are always located in forbidding, isolated places far from curious eyes, protected by layer after layer of illusions and mundane camouflage. An intruder who pierces the veils that obscure an eclipse enclave must contend with a heavily trapped fortress guarded by magical constructs and illumians desperate to keep their existence a secret.





Adventure Hook: A researcher in an eclipse cabal accidentally unleashes a magical plague that wipes out almost the entire cabal. One illumian teleports away and hires the PCs to bring their healing magic back to the enclave. The PCs must find the enclave and gain entrance, but their illumian guide has never been outside and doesn't know about the cabal's defenses. Once the PCs deal with the plague, they'll have to contend with illumians who are grateful—but not about to let anyone leave the enclave knowing its location.

Gauntlet Cabals

While chain cabals spin a web of intrigue to preserve the status quo, gauntlet cabals use espionage as a means of control. They don't have armies at their disposal, so they employ a combination of diplomacy, magic, and trickery to exert influence on the political and religious leaders near their enclave.

Notable gauntlet cabals include Stormwind, Blackflame, Palerider, Warhorn, and Frostpeak.

Typical Directorates: Gauntlet cabals have the usual directorates focused on the cabal's upkeep: resources, education, defense, and research. But because the outside world draws their attention, gauntlet cabals produce a number of agents who work beyond the walls of the enclave. Gauntlet cabals organize multiple directorates devoted to diplomatic efforts, espionage, and small-scale military actions, divided both by the kind of activity and the target. For example, one directorate might be responsible for diplomacy and espionage against Baron Vulreget, while another directorate spies on the baron's army and a third handles the cabal's relations with the rebels seeking the baron's overthrow.

Because gauntlet cabals seek as much power and control as they can manage, the directorates within a particular gauntlet cabal shift as the cabal wins victories and suffers defeats. A directorate assigned to overthrow a church's hold on a particular province, for example, disbands or takes on new duties once it succeeds at destroying the church. As a result, the directorates within a gauntlet cabal may have vague names or names that don't describe what they actually do. The Stormwind cabal, for example, has a special projects directorate that handles issues of internal loyalty, a third column directorate that handles magical threats, and an honor directorate that trains elite strike teams, which are then used by the other directorates.

Plots: Gauntlet cabals are ambitious and always active, constantly fomenting plots against political, religious, and magical powers. The local government near a gauntlet cabal is always riddled with spies in the pay of the illumians, and a successful gauntlet cabal has achieved direct or indirect control over the government's actions as well. A gauntlet cabal likewise tries to control or drive off powerful individuals or monsters (such as the wizard in the mysterious tower or the blue dragon lairing nearby).

The most effective gauntlet cabals act as puppet masters, using their pawns to control others. For example, a gauntlet cabal might use blackmail and magic to control the commander of a military garrison, then turn that garrison against the elf community in a nearby forest. Or the gauntlet cabal could have the garrison pledge its troops to a religious crusade sponsored by the local church of Heironeous—in exchange for the placement of a few illumians in the higher levels of the priesthood.

Enemies and Allies: Gauntlet cabals rarely lack enemies—any group that has fallen on the wrong side of a gauntlet cabal plot is a potential foe. On the other hand, if the cabal's plans come to fruition, the foe is rarely left with enough power to exact revenge on the illumians. A careful gauntlet cabal can avoid reprisals from failed plots by covering its tracks and pinning the blame on nonillumians. But no plot is foolproof, and many gauntlet cabals have been destroyed by military sieges, magical attacks, religious crusades, and assassinations by secret societies.

Just as a gauntlet cabal can have nearly anyone as an enemy, so too can it ally itself with nearly anyone. Gauntlet cabals care only about power and control, and if an alliance helps one toward those ends, the cabal's Black Table is rarely squeamish about making a deal. Even an arrangement with the githyanki isn't out of the question, although any cabal known to have dealings with them would be ostracized by other illumians.

A gauntlet cabal has only one implacable enemy: another gauntlet cabal. When two gauntlet cabals try to control the same prize, the conflict quickly escalates into war; gauntlet cabals easily recognize the "fingerprints" of rival illumians. Gauntlet cabals sometimes war with chain cabals, who see the gauntlet cabals' efforts as meddling. But because gauntlet cabals and chain cabals seek different prizes, the possibility exists for a mutually advantageous pact (turning a chain cabal into a network of spies for a gauntlet cabal, which then focuses its attention elsewhere).

Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in gauntlet cabals.

- An illumian rogue trained from birth as a master of disguise and assassination, but then ensorceled by a would-be target to leave his cabal behind forever.
- An illumian cleric/sorcerer who is the sole survivor of a gauntlet cabal destroyed by demons and who will stop at nothing to rebuild the cabal.
- An illumian fighter/ranger sent into the outside world by a powerful gauntlet cabal to identify future targets for the cabal's machinations.

Enclaves: Gauntlet cabals know that it's just a matter of time before they anger someone with the wherewithal to attack the cabal's enclave. Therefore, gauntlet cabals spare no effort to ensure that any attack on the enclave is costly for the attackers. But unlike eclipse cabals, gauntlet cabals place less effort on keeping the location of their enclave secret, instead choosing to make the enclave obviously more trouble than it's worth to attack. A gauntlet cabal might establish an enclave in the middle of a swamp, amid a steep mountain range, or buried deep beneath the earth. Each enclave features strong battlements clearly augmented by magic, as well as monstrous defenders such as dragons and giants.

Inside an enclave, the focus shifts from a demonstration of strength to a demonstration of power and wealth. Lavish interior decoration adorns areas seen by nonillumians, the better to court visitors to the enclave as potential allies. Colorful illusion magic, magically animated statues, and richly dressed servants project the impression that the cabal is successful and so an alliance might be lucrative.

Adventure Hook: A horde of barbaric orcs is invading settled lands near a gauntlet cabal. The cabal sends the PCs to turn aside or disperse the horde by any means necessary. A few weeks into their mission, the PCs receive new orders, directly from the Black Table: Bring the orc horde to the capital and sack the palace.

Gibber Cabals

Unlike other kinds of cabals, gibber cabals attract chaotic illumians. They tend to be smaller cabals, but they perform an important function: They are responsible for the creation of new words in the Illumian language. Gibber cabals experiment with nonsense syllables, words, and phrases. Usually they create only gibberish, but occasionally they produce a word or phrase with a mystical meaning previously unknown to illumian scholars.

Gibber cabals otherwise function like typical illumian cabals. They plot against power structures in their vicinity, protect their enclave against attack, and accumulate magical and historic lore.

Gibber cabals assume nonsensical names. Notable gibber cabals include Swordfeather, Greenmouth, Ablecadaver, Turtlewing, and Openstalker.

Typical Directorates: While other cabals take prosaic or themed names for their directorates, gibber cabals employ fanciful or nonsense names. While this custom can be confusing to outsiders, those who grow up within the walls of a gibber cabal enclave know the directorate names through daily use.

The Openstalker cabal, for example, uses a rhyming slang to name its directorates. The pretense directorate handles defense, the besmirch directorate handles magical research, and the split-sticks directorate handles logistics.

Plots: Gibber cabals devote themselves to various forms of esoteric magical study, which include experiments that increase the vocabulary of the Illumian language. Sages within gibber cabals contend that when everything in the universe can be described perfectly in Illumian, those who speak the language will be able to reshape reality just by speaking their every desire. Mid- to high-level members of a gibber cabal rarely leave the enclave because they're too busy with magical rituals and experiments.

Gibber Cabal Maze [EL 7]
2 Gibbering mouthers [MM 126]
Flesh golem [MM 137]
1 CR 7
Forest of Enclave
Umber hulk per [MM 249]
Chaos beast [MM 33]
One square = 5 feet

Defense and the day-to-day operations of the cabal's enclave fall to lower-level members and those with less interest in magical affairs. Gibber cabals maintain a cadre of illumian barbarians on guard against enemy attack; illumians from gibber cabals usually have at least a few levels in the barbarian class to reflect a young life spent guarding the enclave. Gibber cabals sometimes try to infiltrate nearby communities or exert political influence on a regional scale, but are too inward-looking to make concerted efforts against the outside world.

Enemies and Allies: Gibber cabals befriend communities of outcasts, who then take up residence within or near the cabal's enclave. Given their habit of spouting gibberish, illumians from gibber cabals tend to be less judgmental than others. The Swordfeather cabal, for example, draws driders from across the underground realms to its labyrinthine enclave. Different gibber cabals work with lycanthropes or with tieflings, half-celestials, and similar crossbred creatures. Because gibber cabals feature confusing passages and mazes, cabals keep trained minotaurs as guards.

Gibber cabals keep to themselves, so they don't have many enemies. The Swordfeathers battle the drow because the illumians harbor driders, but there's no other reason for enmity between the two groups.

Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in gibber cabals.

- An illumian barbarian sent out into the wider world with the prophetic command to "muster an army of solitary ones, and march them back to where they've never been." Is the prophecy gibberish, or will its meaning be revealed over time?
- An illumian cleric/druid seeking lore about a chimeric creature that looks like a four-winged feathered dragon—and speaks fluent Illumian.
- An illumian barbarian/bard craving new experiences that will inspire new words in the Illumian language.

Enclaves: Gibber cabals build underground enclaves so they're less likely to be disturbed. Almost all feature twisting corridors, dead-end hallways, frequent illusions, and a plethora of secret doors. The labyrinthine nature of a gibber cabal enclave is its best defense. Intruders become so confused when navigating their way through an enclave that the cabal can muster an effective hit-and-run defense, then capture the intruders when they discover they can't find the exit.

Adventure Hook: A gibber cabal is paying well for living specimens of several rare monsters. The cabal's researchers want to create names in the Illumian language for the creatures, but they need living examples to do so. The PCs must hunt down the monsters and keep them alive but pacified long enough to return them to the gibber cabal's labyrinthine enclave.

Gravewhisper Cabals

Like other illumians, members of gravewhisper cabals speak fluent Illumian—but they speak it to the dead. Gravewhisper cabals keep their elder members active after death by turning them into liches, vampires, or similar undead. Gravewhisper researchers study necromancy to the exclusion of other schools of magic, and undead minions guard the sinister enclaves of the gravewhisper cabals.

Illumians in gravewhisper cabals regard themselves as more pragmatic than the rest of their race. There's no need to lose the accumulated wisdom of the cabal to old age or misadventure, they contend, when necromantic rituals can keep those who sit at the Black Table alive—and contributing to the cabal's agenda—forever.

Notable gravewhisper cabals include Cryptdelver, Blackshroud, Finalveil, Darkwake, and Lore-Reborn.

Typical Directorates: In addition to the usual directorates of security, intelligence, research, and education, gravewhisper cabals maintain an acquisitions directorate (which acquires unusual or noteworthy bodies from the outside world), a rites directorate (which handles burial and body-preservation activities), and a deathruler directorate (which handles day-to-day control of the cabal's undead minions). The administration directorate, responsible for feeding and caring for the denizens of the enclave, tends to be smaller and less powerful than in other kinds of cabals because many gravewhisper cabal members don't require sustenance or creature comforts.

Plots: Gravewhisper cabals know that much of the outside world doesn't understand their fascination with

necromancy and the undead; on occasion, crusading paladins and various other do-gooders have put gravewhisper enclaves to the torch. Gravewhisper cabals rely on the wisdom and leadership of powerful undead, so a successful attack can leave a gravewhisper cabal permanently bereft of such leadership. Gravewhisper cabals are therefore paranoid about the safety of their enclaves. They aggressively infiltrate any nearby power structures (political, religious, or magical) and maintain a network of agents to warn them of potential threats.

Gravewhisper cabals lust after necromantic lore of all kinds, going to great lengths to acquire tomes that detail the finer points of lichdom rituals, ways to contact a soul after death, and similar matters. They also occasionally engage in corpse snatching, stealing the body of a recently deceased noble, hero, or notable citizen. Once the body is safely ensconced within the gravewhisper cabal's enclave, the illumians raise it, transform the body into a loyal undead minion, or perform other experiments on it.

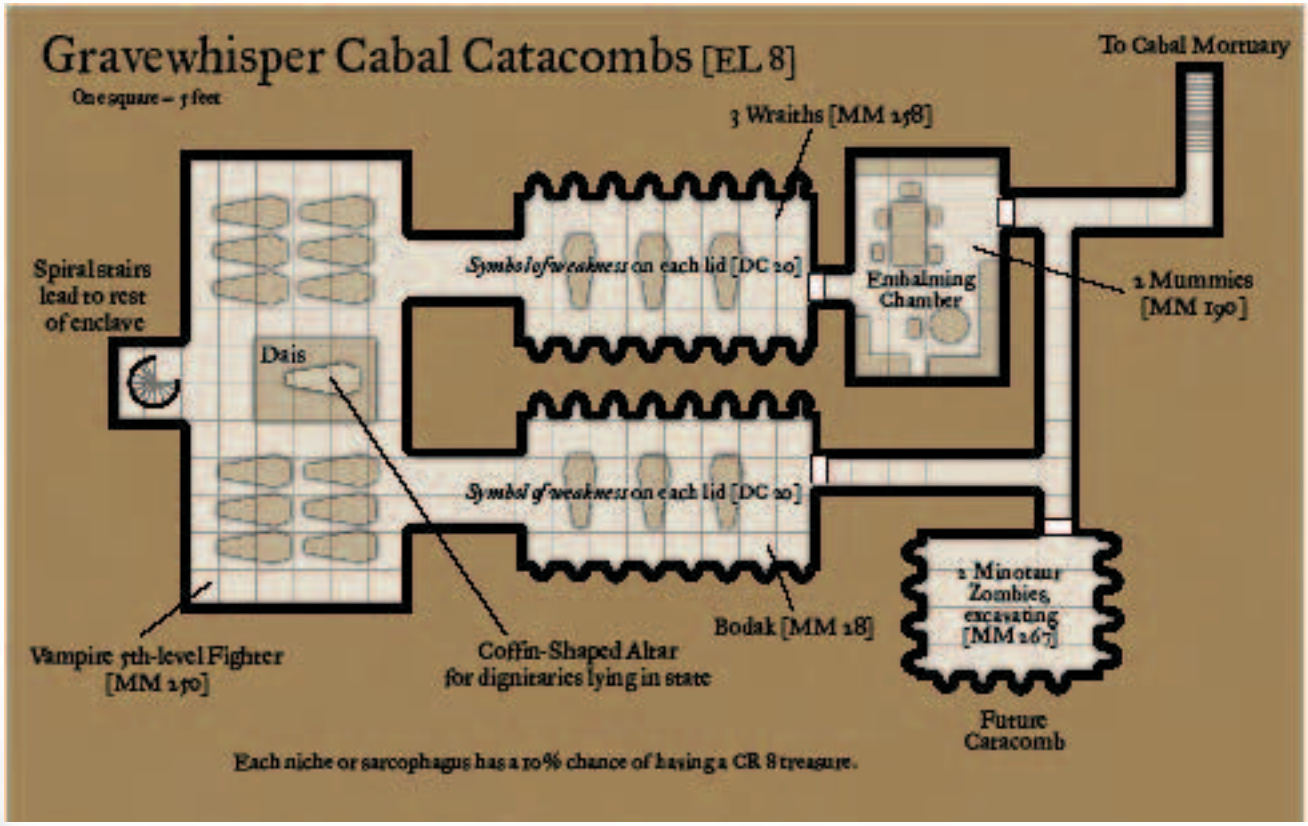
Enemies and Allies: Undead creatures perform the basic functions within a gravewhisper cabal. Zombies and skeletons make up much of the cabal's manual labor, while ghouls and wights guard the enclave from attack. Shadows and spectres act as the cabal's spies in the outside world. Intelligent undead, however, are actually members of the cabal, not just its servants. A gravewhisper cabal usually includes vampires or liches among the members of its Black Table.

Typical Characters: While members of a gravewhisper cabal tend toward evil, not all need be of that alignment. Illumians in gravewhisper cabals regard the creation of undead as a necessary task to keep the cabal's leadership intact, not a terrible blasphemy that defiles both body and spirit. The following characters are typical of those who grow up in a gravewhisper cabal.

- An illumian cleric of Pelor who has kept secret her fear and loathing of the undead. After a childhood surrounded by creatures that repulsed her, she's eager to destroy undead and imprison those who spawn them.
- An illumian wizard/monk interested in sharpening both body and mind—by whatever means necessary.
- An illumian bard/cleric who worships Wee Jas and is curious about ways to cheat death without resorting to traditional lichdom or vampirism.

Enclaves: Gravewhisper enclaves feature extensive catacombs. While the catacombs crawl with ambulatory undead, they are dominated by bodies lying in various states of preservation, waiting for resurrection, conversion to undead, or ritual use.

Adventure Hook: One of the PCs has died in the middle of an adventure, and the other characters are carrying the body back to a friendly temple for resurrection. Along the way, minions and illumian members of a gravewhisper cabal repeatedly waylay them. The cabal believes, rightly or wrongly, that the dead PC possesses information that they can acquire with *speak with dead* or less savory necromantic rituals.


Gravewhisper Cabal Catacombs [EL 8]
One square = 5 feet
To Cabal Mortuary
3 Wraiths [MM 258]
Spiral stairs lead to rest of enclave
Symbol of weakness on each lid [DC 20]
Embalming Chamber
2 Mummies [MM 190]
Dais
Symbol of weakness on each lid [DC 20]
2 Minotaur Zombies, excavating [MM 267]
Bodak [MM 28]
Vampire 5th-level Fighter [MM 250]
Coffin-Shaped Altar for dignitaries lying in state
Future Catacomb
Each niche or sarcophagus has a 10% chance of having a CR 8 treasure.

Quill Cabals

While vengeance cabals take the fight to the githyanki, quill cabals instead attempt to reassemble the lore the illumians lost when the githyanki sacked the Library of the Sublime. Avaricious book collectors, quill cabals stop at nothing to acquire tomes they don't already possess. Their libraries are first-rate, which makes them a target for forces that desire the knowledge ensconced on the shelves of illumian enclaves.

Typical Directorates: The two most important directorates in a quill cabal are the acquisitions directorate (which acquires new tomes and lore for the cabal's library) and the collections directorate (which organizes, researches, and guards the library). The other directorates exist solely to support these two directorates, and the illumians at a quill cabal's Black Table are almost all former acquisitions or collections directors.

Quill cabals also include outreach directorates devoted to working with libraries in nearby communities, often at a wizards' college or major temple. The illumians arrange to staff the library with their sages and make loans from the quill cabal's library in exchange for access to the stacks. While the illumian librarians quickly extract any useful lore from the library they're staffing, they remain afterward to watch for new books.

Plots: A quill cabal does its utmost to obtain new or recently discovered books, so the acquisitions directorate is at the forefront of the cabal's plots. An acquisitions directorate might hire explorers to delve into ancient ruins, or it might sponsor a long journey to acquire a work of great worth—sometimes from a willing seller, but often without the knowledge of the book's current owner.

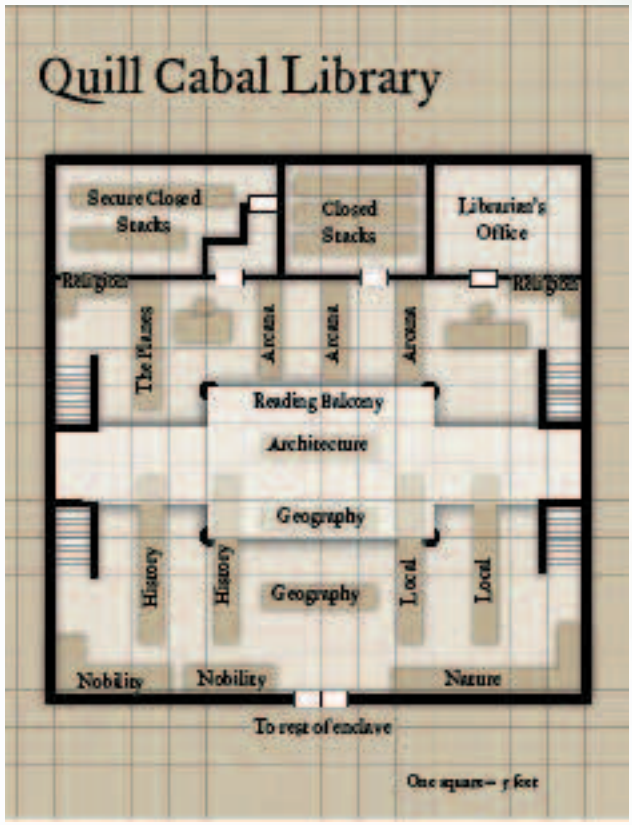
Quill cabals have their share of intracabal plotting. Conflict can emerge between the acquisitions directorate and the outreach directorate if an outside library has important lore. The acquisitions directorate wants to seize the material outright, but the outreach directorate wants to preserve the relationship with the outside library.

Enemies and Allies: Quill cabals maintain friendly relations with other kinds of illumian cabals—they have a reason to be cordial, and all cabals recognize the value of rebuilding the storehouse of knowledge that was once the illumians' greatest possession.

Through their outreach directorates, quill cabals develop powerful allies among wizard colleges, religious libraries, and collectors of lore. While these alliances are pervasive, they don't always run deep. For example, the church of Boccob may appreciate the librarians from a quill cabal, but that doesn't mean they would mount a crusade to save the cabal from a githyanki attack.

Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in a quill cabal.

- An illumian wizard/rogue who leaves the cabal's library to put to use her obscure knowledge of how to bypass a ruin's ancient traps and protective wards.



- An illumian cleric/ranger who travels the world acquiring rare books on behalf of his cabal.
- An illumian paladin trying to perform a series of quests referred to in an ancient text, *Trials of Kilnfire Yushao.*

Enclaves: Quill cabals are packed to the brim with books, maps, scrolls, and lore in all its forms. Shelves line even the hallways in a quill cabal enclave. The central library is usually riddled with traps that kill or imprison intruders while leaving fragile books unharmed.

Every quill cabal enclave has a shrine to Aulasha (see Religion, below), and she figures prominently in much of the artwork and architectural ornamentation. Quill cabal enclaves also maintain the usual array of magical laboratories as well as workshops for papermaking, binderies, and the like. If the cabal has an active outreach directorate, the enclave creates magic portals to remote libraries where its librarians work.

Adventure Hook: Explorers have recently discovered the ruins of an ancient culture, half buried by a massive sandstorm in a far-off desert. A quill cabal wants the PCs to race to the ruins and acquire any valuable texts before treasure-seekers scatter the contents of the ruins across a hundred bazaars.

Root Cabals

The rarest of illumian cabals, root cabals establish enclaves in the most isolated, forbidding wilderness the world has to offer. Root cabals are fervent defenders of the forests,

mountains, and swamps they call home, protecting the area around their enclaves from predation by monsters and settlement by civilized races. In the solitude that isolation affords, they study the local flora and fauna, trying to tap into the life energy of the natural world.

Notable root cabals include Autumnleaf, Thorntwist, Frostrime, Tidechant, and Oakmaw.

Typical Directorates: Root cabals contain a gleaner directorate responsible for gathering food from the surrounding land, a predator directorate that patrols the area for intruders, a nurselog directorate that instructs the young, a seeder directorate that uses magic to protect and sustain the land, and a taproot directorate that performs magical research into life energy.

Plots: Root cabals expend a great deal of effort keeping their turf safe from marauding beasts and encroaching civilization. A typical root cabal might try to frighten away human pioneers, sow dissent among a clan of nearby giants, or acquire the magic balm that arrests an epidemic of tree-blight.

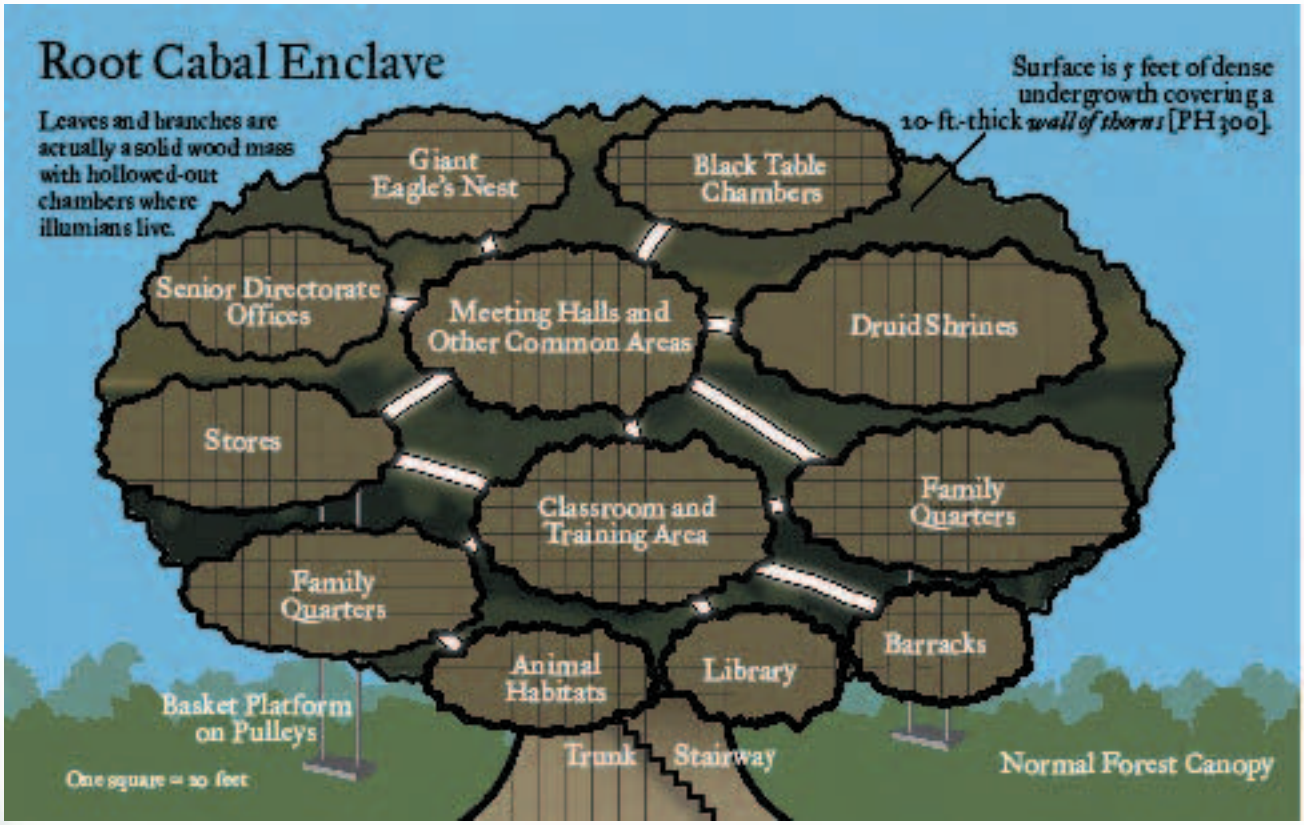
Enemies and Allies: Root cabals work with intelligent creatures that can be trusted to live in concert with the land, such as centaurs, goliaths (described in *Races of Stone*), and lizardfolk. Others ally themselves with fey inclined to help guard their lands, such as dryads and nymphs. The most strident root cabals trust only plants and animals, relying on druid-enhanced flora and fauna as guardians.

Root cabals stay out of illumian politics, so their only enemies are those who threaten the ecosystem that surrounds a cabal's enclave. Root cabals often have to drive intruders away, whether those intruders are well-meaning human settlers, marauding orc armies, or aggressive giant clans. Root cabals that use their lands for magical experimentation sometimes draw the ire of self-styled defenders of the natural world, such as treants, nonillumian druids, and organized groups of lycanthropes.

Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in root cabals.

- An illumian druid/ranger whose hard work on behalf of the cabal has earned her a year of "detached duty"—hopefully long enough to sate her wanderlust.
- An illumian cleric of Obad-Hai who is the lone survivor of his cabal, which was destroyed by a flight of marauding green dragons.
- An illumian druid/bard, sent by a root cabal to learn all she can about "lands far and wide," who magically corresponds with her masters during her adventures.

Enclaves: Root cabals use the natural terrain at their disposal to build their enclaves. Sometimes their enclaves are camouflaged by terrain, such as a dungeonlike enclave under a mossy hillock. More often their enclaves appear as weird structures that stand out from the surrounding land while obviously being a part of it; root cabals want the architecture of their enclaves to imply that "These lands are under our protection." In a forest, a root enclave might



be a spherical tangle of branches supported by dozens of massive oak trunks—with animated branches set to grasp intruders. A mountain enclave might be a graceful series of towers attached to a sheer cliff at the end of a box canyon. A subterranean enclave might be a warren entirely within a hollowed-out stalagmite in a massive underground cavern.

Adventure Hook: A spontaneous series of crop failures sparks an investigation by the PCs, and the trail soon leads to a nearby root cabal. The cabal is tapping the life energy of the region's soil for its magical experiments. The PCs must convince the cabal to stop, force it to do so, or find it an alternative source of magical energy.

Vengeance Cabals

Vengeance cabals are the most recent cabal type to emerge in illumian society, and the least common cabal type. They are somewhat more common outside the Material Plane, because an extraplanar location provides them readier access to their greatest enemies.

Vengeance cabals exist to hunt down and slay as many githyanki as they can find, in revenge for the destruction of the illumians' Library of the Sublime (see below).

Notable vengeance cabals include Astralhunter, Githslayer, Tornpage, Bitterblood, and Oathkeeper.

Typical Directorates: Like other cabals, vengeance cabals are divided into directorates, but they have a military organization within each directorate. The directorates themselves have names inspired by the military, such as infantry, headquarters, and intelligence. A captain is in charge of each directorate, supported by a network of lieutenants as well as rank-and-file illumians.

Plots: Almost everything a vengeance cabal does is devoted to revenge against the githyanki for sacking the Library of the Sublime. Vengeance cabals combine direct action (illumian strike teams that roam the Astral Plane looking for githyanki to slay) with subtler interventions (giving githyanki city maps to mind flayers and aiding githzerai assault teams). Vengeance cabals take reasonable care to avoid reprisals from the githyanki, but if a vengeance cabal can lure angry githyanki into attacking its enclave, that's just another chance to kill more of the hated enemy.

Enemies and Allies: The githyanki are obviously at the top of a vengeance cabal's enemies list. Most cabals disregard other enemies unless they directly threaten the well-being of the cabal. Githyanki from communities or military units that actually took part in the sacking of the Library of the Sublime are particularly hated. Illumians can usually identify such githyanki if enough of their history is known, and they are shown no mercy.

Vengeance cabals have common cause with the githyanki's two traditional foes: githzerai and mind flayers. Because githzerai and illumians share a lawful outlook and a love of learning, cooperation between them is commonplace. Alliances with mind flayers happen less often, simply because mind flayers make such disturbing allies. Mind flayers also seem overly curious about the lore contained within the Library of the Sublime, so vengeance cabals wonder whether they have ulterior motives in hunting down the githyanki who looted it.

Typical Characters: The following characters are typical of those who grow up in vengeance cabals.

- An illumian paladin who seeks a silver dragon steed so he can joust with red dragon-riding githyanki.
- An illumian fighter/wizard who retreats to the Material Plane, eager to put ceaseless war against the githyanki behind her.
- An illumian bard/rogue fascinated with recovering books taken from the Library of the Sublime and later scattered across the multiverse.

Enclaves: Even more than other cabals, the enclaves of vengeance cabals are armed camps. Most are walled fortresses in isolated wastelands of the Material Plane or the Plane of Shadow, although a few vengeance cabals create floating fortress-ships that drift on the haze of the Astral Plane. Almost all enclaves of vengeance cabals have one or more planar portals within them, leading to the Astral Plane or to the shadow city of Elirhondas.

Adventure Hook: Using extensive illusion and enchantment magic, a spy for the githyanki has infiltrated a vengeance cabal and is tipping off the githyanki about illumian raids. Because the members of the cabal's Black Table don't know who can be trusted within the cabal, they invite the PCs to stay at their enclave for a time and uncover the traitor.

LAWS AND JUSTICE

Illumian law sits entirely in the hands of each cabal's arbiter, who enforces the cabal's laws and metes out punishment. No one, visitor or cabal member, is beyond the reach of the arbiter for crimes that occur within the walls of the enclave or during a cabal mission. The arbiter handles every aspect of the illumian justice system, from the investigation of a crime to the trial and the sentencing.

The arbiter heads the justice directorate and investigates the most serious crimes personally, assigning subordinates to more routine cases (assuming the cabal is large enough to warrant assistants). Any member of the justice directorate can make arrests, but only the arbiter can judge someone's guilt or innocence. The arbiter is more than just a judge, however. The arbiter questions witnesses, cross-examines the accused, and can stop a trial to gather evidence. When the arbiter is satisfied that he has all the relevant evidence, he renders a judgment (and sentence, if necessary) on the spot.

The illumian code of laws varies from cabal to cabal. Because illumians love the written word so intensely, arbiters keep a law library full of Black Table decrees, legal precedents, and prior opinions they can turn to for guidance. In this respect, the illumian justice system is more like a modern court system than a medieval one. However, the notion of an impartial judge and a separate jury is foreign to illumians. An arbiter has total control of the legal process, which is efficient if the arbiter is fair and competent and potentially dangerous if the arbiter has an ulterior motive.

Those who feel an arbiter's decision is unfair can draft a written appeal to the Black Table. The members of the Black Table must read the appeal, but need not act on it. By custom, they can only overturn the arbiter's decision by removing the arbiter from his or her post, but they can change a punishment by decree. The right of appeal isn't limited to the accused; victims or other wronged parties may appeal to the Black Table if they feel a punishment was too lenient.

The illumian formula for sentencing includes restitution for the victim, a deterrent punishment, and some degree of social stigma for the criminal. Arbiters employ great creativity in developing punishments that thematically fit the crime. For example, an illumian convicted of poisoning a rival's wine might be assigned the following punishment:

- Pay an annual stipend to the victim (restitution).
- At every meal, serve the victim (social stigma).
- Taste each course before offering it to the victim, but receive no other food and thus linger on the brink of starvation (deterrent).

Roleplaying Application: Your character has undoubtedly seen illumian justice in action, but were you the accused, the victim, or merely a bystander?

TRAVELERS AND RENEGADES

Not every illumian belongs to a cabal, and even those who are part of illumian society don't necessarily spend all their time answering to a director or the Black Table. An illumian might take up the life of an adventurer for any number of reasons.

An Agent Outside: Cabals are eager to learn about life beyond the walls of their enclaves, so they'll send representatives—young illumians trained in self-defense—to explore the surrounding world. As long as the illumian provides periodic reports on her activities and whereabouts (in person or via magical correspondence), cabals are content to allow this "detached duty" to last for years.

Seeker of Lore: Cabals covet rare tomes, maps of recently discovered ruins, and specific items of historical or magical significance. They send trained members out into the world on missions of acquisition. As long as a particular illumian continues to make valuable "finds" from time to time, a cabal keeps him delving into ruins.

Renegade: Cabals don't banish members as punishment, because an illumian knows too many of his cabal's secrets to be released into the outside world with a grudge against the cabal that raised him. Sometimes, though, an illumian flees his cabal's enclave rather than face the judgment (fair or unfair) of an arbiter. The arbiter (and by extension the cabal) is pragmatic enough to weigh the value of recapturing a renegade illumian against the cost in manpower that such a pursuit would require.

Orphan: Not every cabal lasts forever. The survivors of a cabal destroyed by rivals must make their way in the world as well as they can until they join another cabal or found a new one. Some illumians, once they have tasted independence, spurn cabal life for good, living among humans or other races and no longer associating with their own race.

Roleplaying Application: As an illumian, you come from an insular, secretive society. Your reason for standing apart—at least to a degree—from that society says a lot about your character's motivations.

ILLUMIAN RELIGION

In general, dwarves worship Moradin and elves worship Corellon Larethian—or, at least, gods associated with their race. But illumians don't have the long history or powerful gods of those races. Perhaps a quarter of all illumians worship the same gods that their human ancestors did before the Ritual of Words Made Flesh transformed them into illumians. Other illumians worship no deity, instead seeking guidance from more abstract philosophies. The rest worship illumians who have ascended to godhood within the last few centuries.

HUMAN GODS

Gods of magic and learning find a welcome audience among illumians, with Boccob being particularly revered. More illumians worship Boccob than all the other human deities combined. Boccob's clerics promise the faithful that if they live lives devoted to learning, they will become librarians in

Boccob's great library, surrounded forever by the limitless wisdom of the ages.

Vecna holds sway among evil illumians—their love of conspiracies perfectly matches Vecna's portfolio of secrets. Gravewhisper cabals in particular build shrines to Vecna in which they hatch plots of perfidy and undead dominion.

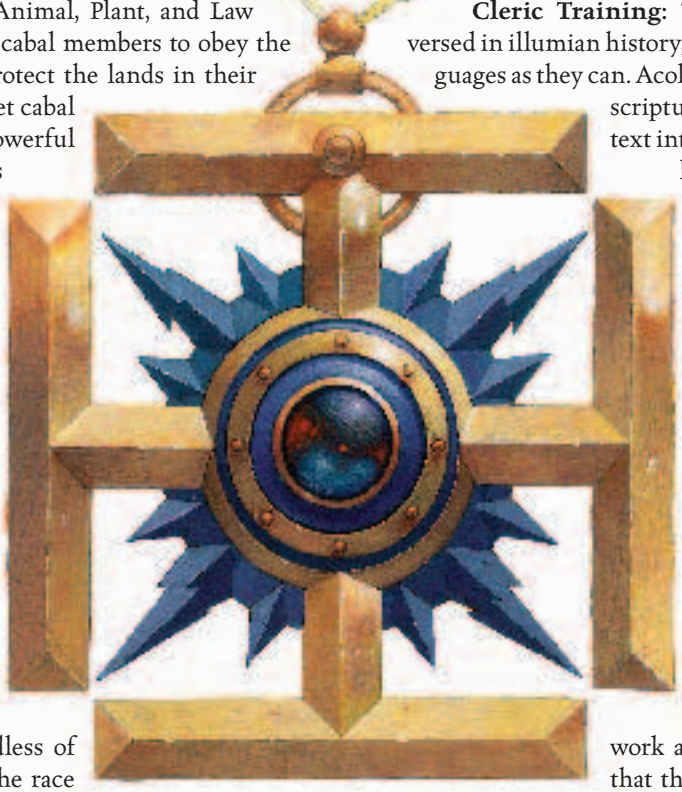
ABSTRACT PHILOSOPHY

Perhaps a quarter of illumian cabals have no shrines to specific gods within their walls, and the cabal's clerics frown on the worship of deities. Instead, they teach devotion to an abstract philosophy or principle, embodied in one or more cleric domains.

For example, an illumian root cabal might have clerics who teach reverence for natural law and the "unimpeachable order of the seasons of life." Those clerics have access to the Animal, Plant, and Law domains, and they counsel cabal members to obey the dictates of the cabal and protect the lands in their care. The clerics of a gauntlet cabal that secretly controls a powerful merchant guild have access to the Travel and Trickery domains—the better to extend the cabal's secret grasp across the miles.

THE ILLUMIAN PANTHEON

Increasingly, cabals at least pay lip service to the illumian pantheon, though the deities represented were themselves mortals within the memories of the longer-lived races. Tarmuid especially is beloved by almost all illumians regardless of alignment, for he created the race and watches over it to this day.



Holy symbol of Tarmuid

Ascension cabals always venerate one or more members of the illumian pantheon, because they're seeking to join its ranks. Half of the other cabals have shrines to Tarmuid and at least a few of the additional illumian deities.

TARMUID, THE FIRST

Demigod (Lawful Neutral)

Tarmuid, the wizard/monk who created the Ritual of Words Made Flesh, was the first illumian and the creator of the illumian race. After he showed other humans how they too could transform themselves into illumians, he spent the rest of his lifespan researching how the Illumian language that infused his body might possess the secret of eternal life. For decades he searched in vain for a means of ascension. Then, upon his deathbed, his final utterance contained words of transfiguring power, and he became a demigod and protector of the illumian people.

To this day, Tarmuid dwells in the Castle of the Infinite Sigil at the heart of the illumian shadow-metropolis of Elirhondas, where he dispatches his clerics and followers to eliminate threats to the illumian race—often by subtle means, but occasionally with an overwhelming crusade.

When Tarmuid appears to the faithful, it is as a pale but handsome illumian in glowing white robes, with every letter in the Illumian alphabet whirling about his head.

Portfolio: Illumians, magic, languages.

Domains: Magic, Protection, Law.

Cleric Training: Tarmuid's clerics are well versed in illumian history, and they learn as many languages as they can. Acolytes of Tarmuid's faith learn scripture by translating the holy text into other tongues, then translating it back into Illumian. Tarmuid's worshipers also pride themselves on their ability to memorize long liturgical passages and recite them word for word.

Tarmuid's clerics turn undead rather than rebuke them and cast *cure* spells spontaneously.

Quests: Tarmuid sends his representatives into the world to discover new kinds of magic or to protect a significant number of illumians from a threat. He also has high-level cleric inquisitors who secretly work among the cabals, ensuring that they adhere to the principles Tarmuid set down when he created the first cabals. Whenever a plot arises that involves the Ritual of Words Made Flesh, Tarmuid's agents are there to make sure that the ritual stays safely split up, but in illumian hands.

Prayers: Tarmuid's prayers, spoken exclusively in Illumian, tend to be long-winded and feature flowery language. Rather than ask for aid from Tarmuid directly, prayers of intercession ask Tarmuid to help the worshiper unlock the secrets of his or her own inner power.

Shrines: Tarmuid's shrines are prominent in the enclave of every cabal where illumians worship him, and even cabals that don't actively worship Tarmuid keep a small shrine as a historical monument and for illumian visitors. Such

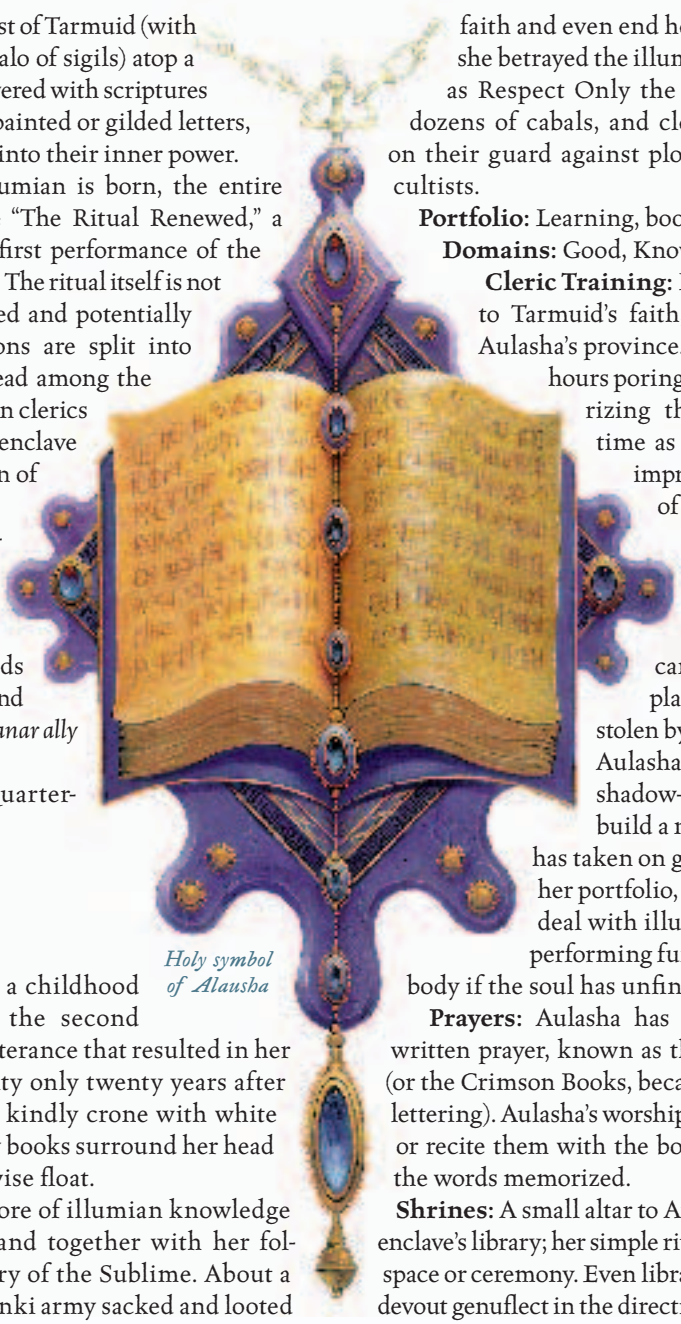
Illus. by W. England

shrines usually feature a bust of Tarmuid (with a *permanent image* for the halo of sigils) atop a black altar. The walls are covered with scriptures and sayings in elaborately painted or gilded letters, exhorting illumians to tap into their inner power.

Rites: Whenever an illumian is born, the entire cabal gathers to recite the "The Ritual Renewed," a reenactment of Tarmuid's first performance of the Ritual of Words Made Flesh. The ritual itself is not performed—it's complicated and potentially deadly, and the instructions are split into hundreds of parts and spread among the cabals. Illumians also call on clerics of Tarmuid to bless new enclave buildings and the formation of new cabals.

Herald and Allies: Tarmuid uses a 20th-level illumian monk as his herald; Vuliak is the current herald's name. He sends hound archons, zelekhuts, and maruts in response to the *planar ally* spells.

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff.



Holy symbol of Alausha

AULASHA, THE LIBRARIAN

Demigod (Lawful Good)

Aulasha, a loremaster and a childhood friend of Tarmuid, was the second illumian to make a final utterance that resulted in her ascension, becoming a deity only twenty years after Tarmuid. She appears as a kindly crone with white hair and a brown robe; tiny books surround her head where sigils would otherwise float.

Aulasha took the vast store of illumian knowledge and lore as her domain, and together with her followers she built the Library of the Sublime. About a hundred years ago a githyanki army sacked and looted the library, driving Aulasha away with only a fragment of her priesthood.

Today, Aulasha's whereabouts are known only to her most trusted clerics. She relentlessly hunts across the cosmos for the contents of her library, and her followers have vowed to rebuild it better than before. Aulasha was so full of sorrow after the library's destruction that she added grief and sorrow to her portfolio, and she is venerated whenever an illumian mourns a lost friend or suffers a similar tragedy.

The destruction of the Library of the Sublime was the illumian people's greatest tragedy, and not every illumian has forgiven Aulasha for "letting" the githyanki overrun it. An active cult of illumians tries to destroy Aulasha's faith and even end her divinity because they feel she betrayed the illumian people. The cult, known as Respect Only the Brave, claims adherents in dozens of cabals, and clerics of Aulasha are always on their guard against plots or outright attacks from cultists.

Portfolio: Learning, books, grief.

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Law.

Cleric Training: If the spoken word is central to Tarmuid's faith, then the written word is Aulasha's province. Her would-be clerics spend hours poring over religious tomes, memorizing their contents. Many spend time as scribes, creating new—and impressively illuminated—copies of important books.

Quests: Aulasha's followers are obsessed with rebuilding the Library of the Sublime; as such, they can be found scouring every plane of existence for tomes stolen by the githyanki. Thousands of Aulasha's worshipers toil daily in the shadow-metropolis of Elirhondas to build a new library. Because Aulasha has taken on grief and mourning as part of her portfolio, her high-level followers now deal with illumians who have died, either performing funeral rites or raising the dead body if the soul has unfinished business.

Prayers: Aulasha has set down several books of written prayer, known as the *Volumes of Sacred Liturgies* (or the Crimson Books, because of their traditionally red lettering). Aulasha's worshipers read the liturgies silently or recite them with the book open—even if they have the words memorized.

Shrines: A small altar to Aulasha usually adorns a cabal enclave's library; her simple rites demand little in the way of space or ceremony. Even librarians who aren't particularly devout genuflect in the direction of the shrine when they're tackling particularly difficult research—or when they can't seem to find a mislaid book.

Rites: Recently clerics of Aulasha have been performing funeral rites, which traditionally are part of a cleric of Glautru's repertoire. Unlike Glautru's rites, Aulasha's funerals emphasize audience participation, with each friend and family member offering a blessing, a favorite memory, or a comforting word to the survivors.

Herald and Allies: Aulasha's herald, a solar, died defending the Library of the Sublime from the githyanki, and Aulasha hasn't appointed a replacement. Her favorite planar allies are hound archons, trumpet archons, and planetars.

Favored Weapon: Warhammer.

Illus. by W. England

GLAUTRU, THE SEER

Demigod (Neutral)

Glautru was an illumian cleric of Boccob before he ascended to godhood himself several centuries after Tarmuid and Aulasha. He still visits Boccob from time, but he takes his responsibilities as the god of illumian fate very seriously and regards Boccob as a wise colleague, no longer worthy of worship.

Illumian clerics say that Glautru's vision is so keen that he can read an illumian's entire destiny—from birth to death and beyond—simply by looking at his or her aura for a moment. When Glautru meets someone new, he takes a moment to study the individual's aura, makes a cryptic comment, then opens his book to write down his findings. No one other than Glautru has ever tried to read the book and lived.

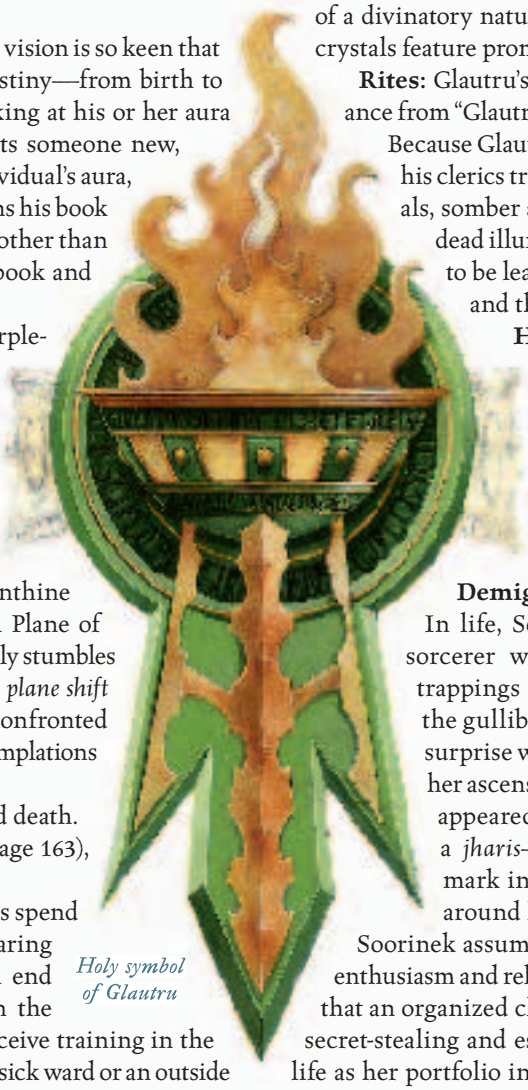
Glautru usually appears as a purple-robed man with a white goatee, carrying a massive, ironbound book in one hand. Where his legs would be is a column of fire that levitates him a few inches above the ground and propels him forward.

Glautru ponders the infinities of fate and destiny from a labyrinthine fortress of flame on the Elemental Plane of Fire. Occasionally a visitor accidentally stumbles into the fiery maze (such as when a *plane shift* or similar spell goes awry), and is confronted with Glautru, annoyed that his contemplations have been interrupted.

Portfolio: Prophecy, fate, life and death.

Domains: Death, Destiny (see page 163), Fire, Healing.

Cleric Training: Glautru's clerics spend a great deal of time in meditation, staring into a flickering fire for hours on end and trying to discern prophecy in the dancing of the flames. They also receive training in the healing arts, working in an enclave's sick ward or an outside hospital.



Holy symbol of Glautru

Glautru's clerics rebuke undead rather than turn them and cast *inflict* spells spontaneously.

Quests: When issues of fate and prophecy are concerned, Glautru's worshipers place themselves in the thick of matters. Like Aulasha, Glautru sends his high-level followers to attend to matters of life and death, including resurrections and efforts to recover illumian souls that have been stolen or imprisoned in some way.

Prayers: Prayers to Glautru are elliptical and hard for others to understand because they refer to dreams and omens that only the worshiper has experienced. They're usually voiced in the future tense: "Glautru will bless this place, as he will blow the leaves from the trees . . . the leaves of fiery red and burnt orange. Yet Glautru will never leave me . . ." begins a common prayer to bless a new house of worship, for example.

Shrines: Glautru's priests keep a golden brazier burning at the center of the Seer's shrines. Additional adornment is rare. By tradition, only rough-hewn furniture and no art of any kind is welcome in Glautru's houses of worship. Items of a divinatory nature such as dice, fonts of water, and crystals feature prominently, however.

Rites: Glautru's rites are divinatory, seeking guidance from "Glautru's connection to the fiery cosmos." Because Glautru knows the fate of each illumian, his clerics traditionally perform illumian funerals, somber affairs in which a cleric recites the dead illumian's lineage, briefly notes a lesson to be learned from the fate of the deceased, and then cremates the body.

Herald and Allies: Glautru's herald is a black dragon wyrm. He sends Medium, Large, and Huge fire elementals as planar allies.

Favored Weapon: Longsword.

SOORINEK, THE DOUBTER

Demigod (Lawful Evil)

In life, Soorinek was a powerful illumian sorcerer who disdained religion as "mere trappings designed to accrue power from the gullible and weak-minded." Imagine her surprise when her final utterance resulted in her ascension to godhood. Since then she has appeared as a black-skinned illumian with a *jharis*—the equivalent of the question mark in the Illumian language—floating around her head.

Soorinek assumed her new role with a mixture of enthusiasm and reluctance. She quickly saw the power that an organized church could bring, so she took the secret-stealing and espionage that was her hallmark in life as her portfolio in godhood. But she is unwilling to behave like an omniscient, omnipotent deity, and she uses the power of her church to tear down anyone or any group that exceeds its rightful place and authority. Many a powerful king, proud general, and pious priest has fallen victim to the subtle plotting of Soorinek's followers. Even her fellow deities aren't immune to Soorinek's drive to make sure no one exceeds their station.

Soorinek directs her church from a citadel shaped like a gray orb that hangs in the nothingness of the Negative Energy Plane. But she has been spending more time lately conferring with the archdevils of the Nine Hells than in her lonely spherical palace.

Portfolio: Intrigue, secrets, betrayal.

Domains: Evil, Luck, Trickery.

Illus. by W. England

Cleric Training: Soorinek pits her would-be clerics against one another from the first day in seminary training, announcing that only the top quarter of a given group will attain the priesthood. A series of tests and examinations gives the acolytes ample opportunity to betray and sabotage each another, so only those well versed in political maneuvering become Soorinek's clerics.

Quests: "The sharpest nail gets the file," states one of Soorinek's proverbs She orders her minions to neutralize or tear down a power structure that has overstepped its bounds. Sometimes she targets powerful and ambitious cabals, sending her worshipers to bring them to heel. She also directs her clerics and followers to work as agents of illumian revenge, exhorting them to attack any group that has wronged the illumians.

Holy symbol of Soorinek

Prayers: Soorinek's prayers begin with the phrase "Soorinek says . . ." and take the form of proverbs. There are no group prayers in Soorinek's faith, and her prayers of intercession describe a Soorinek worshiper alone against the world.

Shrines: Soorinek's shrines feature gaudy paintings, with frescoes on the walls depicting illumians about to perform great deeds such as monster slaying, marching off to war, or casting powerful spells. But they never actually depict the great deeds themselves; and, by tradition, each illumian face is painted so that it looks toward the same place: an utterly blank wall at the far end of the shrine. Furniture tends to be simple and individualized, with chairs rather than pews and pillows rather than kneeling rails.

Rites: Soorinek's clerics offer a number of rites for illumians seeking a blessing of good fortune—or ill fortune for a hated rival. Rites are usually brief, one-on-one affairs between priest and worshiper. Clerics of Soorinek hold confidentiality in high regard, so an illumian usually feels comfortable performing a rite that wishes bad luck on an enemy, confident that the cleric won't tell anyone about performing the rite.

Herald and Allies: Soorinek's herald—and rumored consort—is a pit fiend. She sends bearded devils, bone devils, and ice devils in response to *planar ally* spells.

Favored Weapon: Scimitar.

SYERET, THE LIGHTBRINGER

Demigod (Chaotic Good)

Depicted in painting and sculpture as a golden-armored illumian bearing an oversized torch, the bard Syeret was the fifth illumian to ascend to godhood and the first to do so as the head of an ascension cabal. He has since taken the ascension cabals under his wing, promising to "use my torch to light the way to divinity for all." Syeret likewise is popular among gibber cabals, because he values creativity and his prayers incorporate invented words.

Syeret became a deity less than three centuries ago, and he hasn't yet established a permanent base. He has started palace construction several times amid the white dust of Arborea's third layer, only to start over again when a new architectural inspiration strikes.

Portfolio: Inspiration, light, creativity.

Domains: Chaos, Sun, Travel.

Cleric Training: Syeret's clerics, in addition to learning the songs and scriptures essential to religious life, must create an artistic masterpiece of some kind before being admitted to the priesthood. Because many of Syeret's followers have bardic training, hymns and musical works are the most common acolyte masterworks, but would-be clerics may opt for dramas, oratories, or fine arts such as painting or sculpture.

Quests: Syeret delights in the new, so his followers shepherd recently created objects and ideas into being. They help found cabals, create new masterworks of magic lore, and gather the raw materials for new magic items and artifacts for the illumian people.

Prayers: Syeret demands that his worshipers improvise their prayers, which tend to be rhythmic and rhymed. It's common for prayers to Syeret to include nonsensical words to justify a rhyme scheme and repeated syllables to keep a prayer's rhythm intact.

Holy symbol of Syeret

Illus. by W. England

Shrines: *Continual flames* and other forms of magical light illuminate every corner of Syeret's shrines. Art abounds, as does music (animated instruments play themselves even when no one is around). In keeping with Syeret's command to continually create, worshipers keep his shrines in a perpetual state of redecoration. A curious shrine-goer could chip away at the paint on the walls and find dozens of different layers, each a different color.

Rites: Clerics of Syeret want to bless every new creation they can, and they have an extensive collection of ceremonies for everything from a new enclave building to a newly strung longbow. Syeret's worshipers hold seasonal holiday rites on the equinoxes and solstices—festive occasions when illumians give thanks for the safety of the enclave and the continued progress of their race.

Herald and Allies: Syeret uses an 18 HD will-o'-wisp as his herald. Janni genies, leonal guardinals, and planetar angels are his usual planar allies.

Favored Weapon: Mace.

WATHAKU, THE SILENT

Demigod (Neutral Evil)

Wathaku is the youngest of the illumian gods, having attained godhood less than a century ago. If Wathaku has his way, he will also be the last illumian to ascend to godhood. Wathaku seeks nothing less than the death of all illumians, the unmaking of his fellow illumian deities, and the end of the Illumian language.

The motivation behind Wathaku's desires is a mystery, because few sources document Wathaku's life prior to becoming a deity. So far his church is little more than a secret cult, outlawed in almost every illumian cabal. Even so, a few madmen and the truly desperate find a reason to live by Wathaku's nihilistic philosophy, so his religion has slowly grown over the years. Wathaku's clerics—who typically pretend to worship another god or no god in particular—try to steal the fragments of the Ritual of Words Made Flesh that each cabal guards. If Wathaku can gain possession of a complete copy of the ritual, perhaps he can reverse it and literally unspeak the Illumian language, destroying all illumians in the process.

When he deigns to appear to his followers, Wathaku appears as a burly illumian with blank skin where his mouth would be and a single silver line where his sigils would otherwise float. Wathaku has no known fortress or base, instead moving incognito from cabal to cabal by taking the form of mortal illumians.

Holy symbol of Wathaku

Portfolio: Entropy, wrath, endings.

Domains: Destruction, Evil, Strength.

Cleric Training: Wathaku's high priests never admit it until training is nearly complete, but all would-be clerics must pass a secret test, even after they've memorized the necessary prayers and scriptural passages. Each cleric must secretly kill an illumian and transcribe his or her final utterance, which is added to a secret trove of manuscripts kept by Wathaku's church.

Quests: Wathaku exists to erase everything illumian. His agents work in secret to bring about the downfall of illumian cabals and the unraveling of illumian plots. Whatever the rest of the illumian gods plan, Wathaku's followers seek to thwart.

Prayers: In keeping with his name, Wathaku has no spoken prayers. Instead, his worshipers meditate on a particular prayer, repeating it in their minds as they meditate. A slightly bowed head and briefly closed eyelids are the only outward indication that a follower of Wathaku is praying.

Shrines: Wathaku favors no formal shrines because his is a secret religion. When a group of worshipers gather, they place crude figurines on a shelf and perform their silent prayers, then disperse immediately.

Rites: Wathaku's only rite is a rite of initiation, full of so many loathsome activities that afterward the present worshipers have all the blackmail material they'll ever need to hold over the new initiate. This threat helps to ensure the continued loyalty—and silence—of every initiate, even if one's faith later wavers.

Herald and Allies: Wathaku has no herald—he either ignores a situation or takes care of it himself. He responds to *planar ally* spells with succubus demons, retriever demons, and marilith demons.

Favored Weapon: Morningstar.

HISTORY AND FOLKLORE

As a bookish people, illumians are acutely aware of their histories. The traditions and laws of their cabals are drilled into them from an early age. But because illumian cabals don't mix much, illumians have less shared folklore and common history than most races. Still, some events are so crucial to illumian history that every child knows about them. Others

Illus. by W. England

have spread from cabal to cabal over the centuries, growing and twisting with each telling until they have become legends not found in any illumian history book.

RITUAL OF WORDS MADE FLESH

The most important event in illumian history is the founding of the race itself—an event that happened mere centuries ago.

Tarmuid was a monk, scholar, and powerful wizard who lived in a far-off island monastery. A natural linguist, he began to notice certain patterns in ancient magic texts he was translating. Over time, Tarmuid discerned a common pattern to how various ancient languages expressed magical concepts. After years of research and experimentation, Tarmuid developed his own language, based on the underpinnings of magical expression. Tarmuid called this language, invented from the bones of long-dead languages, Illumian.

As Tarmuid became more adept at speaking Illumian, he noticed that each word he spoke carried residual magical power that infused both the speaker and anyone who heard the words. Tarmuid sought a way to use the language itself to create a vessel that would be receptive to the power within his words. After countless failed experiments, Tarmuid developed the Ritual of Words Made Flesh, a spoken rite that would transform any human who heard it into a creature infused with the power of the Illumian language. Through the ritual, what was once human would become illumian—the Illumian language in tangible, humanoid form.

Tarmuid performed the ritual on himself, becoming the world's first illumian. He quickly shared his discovery with the humans living in the monastery, and they too became illumians. Only after creating several hundred illumians did Tarmuid begin to worry that the Ritual of Words Made Flesh could be twisted to other purposes, creating less useful transformations or even utterances that would destroy those who heard them.

Tarmuid convinced his fellow illumians of the ritual's danger, but they in turn persuaded him not to destroy the instructions for performing the Ritual of Words Made Flesh. Instead, the illumians split up into small groups and scattered across the globe, each group taking along part of the ritual's instructions. Those groups soon evolved into the cabals that are today the foundation of illumian society, and each cabal still guards part of the Ritual of Words Made Flesh. Because illumians now reproduce infant illumians normally, the ritual isn't needed to sustain the illumian race.

Adventure Hook: Through theft, murder, and subterfuge, cultists of Wathaku have assembled many of the parts of the Ritual of Words Made Flesh. Ultimately, they intend to reverse the ritual and "uncreate" illumians everywhere. The PCs must chase Wathaku's agents from cabal to cabal, trying to safeguard the parts of the ritual that Wathaku doesn't yet have.

THE JOURNEY OF NEVERLOST KAODEI

Popular folklore among the illumians contends that Tarmuid performed the Ritual of Words Made Flesh one last time in secret before splitting up the instructions and scattering the illumians across the world. The only human to hear the final performance of the ritual was a bard named Kaodei, who happened to be visiting the monastery when Tarmuid created the first illumians.

Tarmuid made a risky, improvised alteration to the ritual as he performed it for Kaodei. As a result, Kaodei became an illumian who never ages, suspended forever as a young adult. Kaodei isn't immortal, says the legend, but he doesn't age naturally and needs only fear death by accident or violence.

To this day, Kaodei walks the earth at Tarmuid's behest, traveling from cabal to cabal and safeguarding the future of the illumian race. Kaodei is a powerful spellcaster and a master of disguise, say the legends, so he doesn't reveal his true nature. The handsome illumian is credited for dozens of heroic efforts on behalf of his people, often arriving just as beleaguered illumians are losing hope.

Adventure Hook: A mysterious illumian lies delirious and ill, referring to himself as "Kaodei" and describing how doppelgangers have infiltrated an illumian cabal. The PCs must decide whether it's better to try to find a cure for Kaodei's illness or to rush to the cabal and do Kaodei's work for him. They might try to discern whether the sick illumian is really Kaodei or simply an illumian inspired by his legend.

THE ASCENSION OF TARMUID

After dividing up the Ritual of Words Made Flesh and spreading illumian cabals across the world, Tarmuid retreated to his laboratories to further refine the Illumian language and study its interaction with various magical phenomena. He kept his closest friends with him as a personal cabal, and he observed that as the divine spellcasters among them prayed for spells, their words fused with magic in a unique manner.

Thus began Tarmuid's second great research project: uncovering the connection between the Illumian language and the divine power of the gods themselves. For decades Tarmuid tried to use the Illumian language to tap into divine power, to no avail. Even as his body began to fail him, he persisted in his attempts to channel divine power with his words.

On his deathbed, Tarmuid chanted in Illumian unceasingly, voicing words and concepts both thrilling and perplexing to the illumians caring for him. One night Tarmuid's heart failed, and the founder of the illumian race began his final utterance, the Illumian words within him returning to the cosmos.

In that final utterance, Tarmuid's last, instinctive expression succeeded where his conscious efforts had failed.

Tarmuid found himself returned to life and overflowing with divine energy—a demigod whose every word was an explosion of divine power. After spending time in seclusion to understand his new role, Tarmuid began revealing himself to illumian cabals, pledging to shepherd the race into a bright future.

Adventure Hook: An ascension cabal's most elderly member is nearly ready to make her final utterance, perhaps to join Tarmuid in the ranks of the divine. She asks the PCs to recover a powerful magic sword so that she can carry it into divinity with her. If the PCs succeed, they may win a reward from the illumian's newest deity, but they have to get the sword to her before she makes her final utterance.

THE SACK OF THE LIBRARY

A race founded by scholars and obsessed with language, the illumians are inveterate book collectors. The greatest aggregation of their lore was the Library of the Sublime, a fortress on the Astral Plane where even the most fragile tome would be immune from the further decay of time. Protected by the demigod Aulasha the Librarian, an illumian city of scholars grew up around the library, collaborating on research into magic, the multiverse, and even more esoteric mysteries. It was said that the discussion in a single salon within the library would stagger the imagination of earthly sages, so great was the accumulated knowledge and wisdom there.

But knowledge itself is a treasure, and not everyone was content to let the illumians keep such treasure to themselves. Centuries ago, a powerful githyanki army led by Vlaakith the lich-queen herself laid siege to the Library of the Sublime, eager to acquire for themselves the knowledge within its tomes. The illumians of the library mounted a defense that was both strategically brilliant and appallingly desperate, but in the end the githyanki were just too numerous and powerful. They seized and looted the library, slaughtering any illumian who didn't flee. Then, the treasure trove of wisdom within the Library of the Sublime proved too much for the covetous githyanki, who fell into fighting among themselves over the books. Various githyanki factions absconded with parts of the library's collection, and many other books were lost in the battles that followed the invasion of the library.

Though the attack happened years ago, the tale of the Library of the Sublime still brings tears to illumian eyes. To this day, illumians hate the githyanki with a passion that overcomes the usual illumian pragmatism toward other races. Some illumians bear a grudge against the library-god Aulasha, because she was unable to prevent the sacking of the library. Entire cabals exist for the express purpose of

The Library of the Sublime has been devastated, but some of its secrets may still await discovery

Illus. by R. Sardinha

rebuilding the illumian collection of lore until it again matches the shelves of the Library of the Sublime.

Adventure Hook: A faction among the githyanki is rumored to have reassembled a working copy of the Ritual of Words Made Flesh from the contents of the Library of the Sublime. The githyanki are seeking additional knowledge of Illumian, which will enable them to adapt the ritual to turn githyanki into illumians. The PCs must either prevent the githyanki from acquiring the lore they want, interrupt the ritual directly, or sabotage it by planting false but convincing illumian lore into githyanki hands.

RAISING ELIRHONDAS

Shortly after the sack of the Library of the Sublime, Tarmuid appeared to the illumian cabals in turn. He commanded each of them to send "one capable representative" to a location deep on the Plane of Shadow marked by a concentric ring of volcanoes that erupted shadowstuff in a regular, clockwise pattern. Within weeks, thousands of illumians were camped within the volcanic valley, expecting Tarmuid to announce a counterstrike against the githyanki for the destruction of the Library of the Sublime.

Instead, Tarmuid appeared before the multitude and said simply, "Build a city here." The assembled illumians argued briefly, and several skeptics returned to the Material Plane. Those who remained started using magic to construct buildings, establishing what is now the illumian shadow-metropolis of Elirhondas.

Despite the powerful magic employed by the illumians, the construction process was neither quick nor easy. The shifting nature of the Plane of Shadow caused perplexing structural problems, and it took a great deal of illumian ingenuity to stabilize the region enough to keep the city intact. Worse, the builders had to contend with near-constant assaults from various fiends, undead hordes, and a strike force of githyanki. Despite these obstacles, the illumians succeeded, and today Elirhondas is the largest settlement of Illumians to be found anywhere.

Many of the illumians who built the city remained there, forming the cabal of Elirhondas that rules the city to this day. Others returned to their cabals and are now counted among the illumians' greatest heroes. To most illumians, the raising of Elirhondas is an inspiring counterpoint to the tragic sacking of the Library of the Sublime. The builders of Elirhondas were able to put aside their natural tendency for plotting and subterfuge and work together toward a common good: a refuge for every illumian regardless of cabal affiliation.

Adventure Hook: For years, an illumian cabal has revered its representative to Tarmuid's beckoning, but a rival cabal offers evidence that the illumian hero was actually a skeptic who left the Plane of Shadow before the city was built, then later claimed to have taken part in the construction of Elirhondas. The PCs must travel to Elirhondas and ask high-ranking illumians there whether their fellow cabal member is a hero or a scoundrel. While there, the PCs start to suspect that the answers they receive have more to do with illumian politics than the truth, so they must investigate in secret.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUEROOT

Trueroot is a substance referred to in the lorebooks of root cabals, but no illumian can claim to possess it or have mastered its creation. Hundreds of illumian herbalists and druids have spent their lives in search of trueroot, inspired by an account of its accidental discovery in the *Annals of Oakmaw Nellek*.

The *Annals,* a heavily annotated laboratory notebook of an illumian druid named Nellek, describe a series of experiments in grafting various magically enhanced roots onto treants, then planting seeds from the treants, cross-breeding the resulting saplings, then grafting the saplings with each other and repeating the process. Nellek recorded information about hundreds of failures, the creation of a dozen healthy but normal tree species, and one spectacular result—a powerful sapling with roots that pulled pure magical energy forth from an unknown source. Nellek explains how magical energy from the trueroot sapling, when channeled into nearby plants, caused them to grow at ten times their usual rate. When channeled into members of the cabal, the trueroot energy gave them almost limitless spellcasting abilities and perfect health.

After conducting preliminary experiments, Nellek took branches from the sapling to graft elsewhere and continue the experiment. Though he took only a few small branches, the original trueroot sapling sickened and died. Nellek's efforts to grow another trueroot sapling failed, and he died a bitter, frustrated botanist.

Since Nellek's initial experiments, dozens of illumians have tried to conduct their research in his footsteps and grow trueroot for themselves. None of them has gained an understanding of where Nellek went wrong, and thus far no one has nurtured another trueroot. But the lure of limitless power still draws the finest illumian minds to wander the forest, seeking rare cuttings for their grafting experiments.

Adventure Hook: A blight has fallen across the pastoral woodlands of the plane of Arborea—a root cabal has created a sapling similar to a trueroot that draws the essence of Arborea itself onto the Material Plane. The PCs must find the root cabal and convince its members to stop siphoning the energy of Arborea.

THE HUNTING SECRET

Illumian folklore typically has a teaching function, and few tales are as instructive as the hunting secret. At the heart of the story (the details of which differ with each storyteller) is a secret shared between two illumians—a secret that finds its way across time and geography to ruin the fortunes of both illumians. In other words, the secret itself hunts down the people who broke its confidence.

Illumian storytellers take great pride in coming up with elaborate variations on the story of the hunting secret, but the structure is always the same. In the tale, one illumian tells another illumian something in confidence, and then the two illumians are separated with no hope of reuniting. One of the two illumians breaks the confidence and shares the secret, confident that the breach is harmless—after all, the secret-sharer is so far away that revealing the secret doesn't do any harm.

The best illumian bards earn their keep with the middle part of the story. They describe the tortuous path that the secret takes as it is passed from person to person—and the more clever steps in the path the secret takes, the better. At several points in the narrative, it seems as if the secret will finally come to rest, never to be related again, but then it's somehow passed on to a new character in the story.

The story of the hunting secret ends when the secret is revealed in the presence of the second illumian, causing all sorts of misfortune and woe. This misfortune is reflected back to the illumian who broke the confidence in the first place, leading to a tragic, but satisfying end to the tale.

Adventure Hook: A careless PC lets slip a secret, which has a way of turning up at the most inopportune—and eventually dangerous—moments. Is the PC living the tale of the hunting secret, or is there an overt campaign among the illumians to spread this particular secret?

LANGUAGE

The illumians were literally constructed out of their own language, infused with its essence. Understandably, it's a complex language. The Illumian alphabet has more than a thousand symbols, each corresponding to an entire syllable, not just a single sound.

Illumian syllables often have a degree of meaning themselves. For example, the *vaul* sigil appears in the Illumian words for death (*kreevaul*), resurrection (*vaulagrea*), and reverence for one's ancestors (*nevaulak*). But an illumian word is more than the sum of its syllables, and not every word having to do with the soul contains the *vaul* syllable.

As a side effect, the written form of the Illumian syllable-based alphabet is extraordinarily compact. Even a long word can be expressed in four or five letters, so illumian books have fewer pages—or contain more information—than books written in other languages.

ILLUMIAN PHRASEBOOK

If you're playing an illumian character, you can use the following Illumian phrases at the gaming table. Depending on your play style, you can use the actual Illumian words or their English translations.

Pauthak kireyu! Literally, "Press the advantage!" The most common illumian battle cry, given as illumian soldiers charge into enemy ranks.

Table 3–5: Illumian Syllables

d%	Syllable	d%	Syllable	d%	Syllable
01	ab	35	jah	68	ruk
02	ak	36	jool	69	ruth
03	all	37	jur	70	ryea
04	am	38	kal	71	sath
05	an	39	keh	72	sek
06	ash	40	khur	73	shah
07	av	41	klah	74	shel
08	bak	42	kroat	75	shur
09	bal	43	lash	76	siiv
10	baur	44	lea	77	skir
11	bav	45	luur	78	stak
12	cal	46	mal	79	syel
13	chel	47	man	80	tau
14	cher	48	mem	81	thak
15	crea	49	moor	82	thi
16	dau	50	nahl	83	thool
17	dav	51	nath	84	tla
18	dool	52	noal	85	toor
19	ea	53	nuon	86	trel
20	ehn	54	nyel	87	ua
21	ehv	55	oa	88	ul
22	eo	56	ol	89	uo
23	faur	57	oo	90	urr
24	flan	58	oth	91	vel
25	gak	59	peh	92	vesh
26	gau	60	pith	93	voon
27	griel	61	pla	94	wau
28	haal	62	pran	95	wen
29	hau	63	ptah	96	yao
30	hen	64	quel	97	yeh
31	hrek	65	quo	98	yi
32	ia	66	rao	99	zhao
33	ill	67	rell	100	zur
34	io				

Skellek zey! Another battle cry meaning "Sell yourself dearly," shouted to bolster the ranks when illumians are on the defensive.

Tarmuid boradu. This saying, which translates as "Tarmuid is watching you," has a double meaning. It can be used as comfort in dark times when Tarmuid's help would be appreciated, or when an illumian is acting in an embarrassing or ineffective way (which Tarmuid would likely disapprove of).

Gau halak. A grave insult in Illumian, translating approximately as "blank page." Illumians use the term to describe anyone or anything that is wasteful or not meeting its potential.

Yeshae tal! Meaning "By the ritual!" this is a common exclamation of surprise or exasperation.

Tar vu yote. Used to describe anything that's complete or unusually large, this phrase doesn't translate literally. But the Illumian language uses ten symbols in its alphabet to serve as numbers, and of those symbols, *tar* is the first and *yote* is the last. Thus, the expression has a meaning similar to the Common phrase "from A to Z," although it's used more broadly.

Pretak chalu, ru faalu waskal. A common illumian proverb, "The illumian without fire within cannot warm others." It's used to encourage self-improvement in a way that benefits the whole cabal.

Table 3–6: Illumian Cabal Names

d%	First Word	Second Word
01–04	blood	wing
05–08	rust	dreamer
09–12	black (or other color)	pennant
13–16	first (or other ordinal number)	horizon
17–20	kiln	fire
21–24	storm	wind
25–29	pale	riders
30–33	war	horn (or other instrument)
34–37	frost	peak
38–41	dusk	watcher
42–45	drift	cloud
46–49	ruby (or other gemstone)	talon
50–53	ever	shade
54–57	astral (or other plane)	hunter
58–61	bitter	blood
62–65	oath	keeper
66–69	crypt	delver
70–73	final	veil
74–77	dark	tower
78–81	lore	born
82–85	autumn (or other season)	leaf
86–89	thorn	slayer
90–93	tide	chant
94–97	oak (or other plant)	maw
98–100	sword (or other weapon)	wing

Relakak ghautra ne kalu vash. Another illumian proverb, literally "Declare a winner at the end of the game." It's used to cheer on an underdog in any sort of fight or contest, or to caution a favored contestant against taking victory for granted.

ILLUMIAN NAMES

Once the illumians dispersed into cabals, a simple naming convention emerged. Every illumian takes the name of his or her cabal as a family name, and is given a personal name by his or her parents. To emphasize the importance of the cabal in illumian life, illumians usually identify themselves to outsiders by giving their cabal name first, then their personal name. Within the walls of their enclave and among other cabal members, they use only personal names. After all, in an illumian cabal, the family name is superfluous because everyone shares it.

Personal names don't have any intrinsic meaning in Illumian—they're simply two- or three-syllable identifiers. Illumian cabal names are usually compounds of simple words in the Illumian language.

When an illumian name is spoken in a language other than Illumian, the personal name is untranslatable and is simply pronounced. The cabal name is translated into an equivalent compound word such as "Bloodwing" or "Oakmaw."

Random Name Generation: Illumian personal names almost always have two or three syllables. Because the Illumian alphabet has more than a thousand components, countless acceptable combinations exist. Table 3–5, on the previous page, should suffice to provide a quickly generated random name. Roll on the table two or three times and combine the syllables, adjusting the sounds if necessary so the name sounds pleasing to the ear.

You can generate a cabal name on the fly by consulting Table 3–6 and rolling once in each column, creating a compound word.

EXAMPLE CABAL: BLOODWING

Bloodwing is a typical chain cabal. Comtaining more than two hundred members, it concentrates on keeping the province of Rossalia peaceful and free of strife.

The Bloodwing enclave is a granite edifice created by magic within the heart of the Rossalian forest, far from the prying eyes of civilization. The Bloodwings maintain a magic portal to an underground lair in Sumberton, the nearest city of reasonable size, and a planar portal that connects with Elirhondas once a week.

Several decades ago, the Bloodwing cabal enjoyed a close alliance with the local church of St. Cuthbert, combining their forces with church knights to repulse monstrous attacks on the province. But a rival cabal, the Graypeaks, subverted the Bloodwings' relationship with the church, which no longer trusts illumians of any affiliation. About a decade ago, the Graypeaks and Bloodwings went to war, and the Bloodwings emerged victorious. The war fostered instability throughout the region, however, so ever since the Bloodwings have focused on reestablishing contact (and a measure of control) over the various powers in the region.

The Bloodwing cabal has three main directorates that keep tabs on the rest of Rossalia: Eyes on Sumberton, Eyes on Hellmaw, and Eyes on Tiamat.

Eyes on Sumberton: Members of the noble classes of Rossalia live in a semifeudal state. Most maintain private armies of knights to patrol their lands, and they aren't beyond occasionally going to war with one another over a real or imagined slight. The noble courts in the city of Sumberton are snakepits of alliances and betrayals, and the Eyes on Sumberton directorate uses a network of spies, paid informants, and like-minded allies to keep the infighting from spreading across the region. This usually means "convincing" a particularly hotheaded noble to refrain from attacking a neighbor or breaking up an alliance of nobles before it can dominate the politics of the region.

Adventure Hook: The Eyes on Sumberton directorate has used diplomacy, enchantment magic, and blackmail to keep Lord Macazril from planning a war on Lord Tarvan—and the gnome town under Tarvan's protection—to no avail.

The directorate hires the PCs to infiltrate Macazril's keep and sabotage his ability to make war on the eve of battle.

Eyes on Hellmaw: For the last two years, the Hellmaw goblin tribe has wandered the borders of Rossalia, sporadically raiding the settled communities. Small groups of elite illumians, in concert with a friendly tribe of centaurs, have thus far discouraged more serious incursions. But the Hellmaw tribe is large enough that the Bloodwings would be hard-pressed to stop a Hellmaw invasion, so it's considering plots that either eliminate the tribe's barghest leaders (and probably disperse the tribe) or entice it to raid a different province.

Adventure Hook: The Hellmaw tribe has captured two illumian scouts from the Bloodwing cabal and taken them to be interrogated by the barghests. If the Hellmaw goblins learn that the Bloodwings have been thwarting them for years, they might march right to the Bloodwing enclave. The PCs must rescue the captive illumian scouts before they reveal the truth about the Bloodwing cabal's efforts.

Eyes on Tiamat: The Bloodwing cabal's Black Table created the Eyes on Tiamat directorate only three months ago. Agents of the Eyes on Sumberton directorate uncovered and destroyed a coven of Tiamat-worshiping nobles. Mysterious correspondence found in the secret temple revealed the existence, but not the location, of cells of a region-wide Tiamat cult. The directorate is using every investigative technique it can to find the cells and eliminate them before they can hatch an evil dragon-inspired plot that threatens all of Rossalia.

Adventure Hook: The directorate uncovers the name of a Tiamat cultist among miners in the Rossalian mountains. The PCs must infiltrate the mine, gain the trust of the cultist, and pretend to join the cult, balancing their fake identities with their duty to the cabal until they've learned enough to shut the cult down.

IMPORTANT CABAL MEMBERS

The following NPCs are important members of the Bloodwing cabal. They have statistics appropriate for their station, so you can use them even if you aren't using the Bloodwing cabal.

Bloodwing Ruthek, Black Table

Ruthek is the oldest of the Bloodwings to sit at the Black Table and has a great deal of influence over the Black Table's agenda. Over the decades, he has seen the Bloodwing cabal extend its reach over much of the province of Rossalia, then survive a bitter war with a rival cabal, the Graypeaks. His is a voice of caution at the Black Table, urging the cabal to consolidate its gains rather than foment new, aggressive plots.

Although his loyalty is beyond question, Ruthek isn't above using the resources of the cabal for personal ends. His eldest son lives a life of indolence and luxury as a well-cared-for Final Seed. Ruthek has an older daughter who disappeared during the cabal's battles with the Graypeaks, and he periodically insists that one of the "Eyes on" directorates engage in a mission to search for her. Divination magic has revealed that Ruthek's daughter is alive, but the cabal can't pinpoint her location.

Bloodwing Ruthek: Illumian sorcerer 12/bard 5; CR 17; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d6+5 plus 12d4+12; hp 64; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork cold iron dagger); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork cold iron dagger); SA spells; SQ bardic music 5/day (countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage), bardic knowledge +7, glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils, SR 18; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +17; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 25.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +29, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +21, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Perform +17, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +24; Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Subtle Sigil.

Languages: Common, Illumian, Draconic, Auran.

Bardic Music: Use bardic music five times per day. See the bard class features on page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Countersong (Su): Use music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound.

Fascinate (Sp): Use music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with him.

Inspire Competence (Su): Use music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task.

Inspire Courage (Su): Use music or poetics to bolster his allies against fear and improve their combat abilities.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Ruthek interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Ruthek's combination of power sigils provides him with the *vaulkrau* illumian word. During the time when he prepares his spells, he may choose to leave a spell slot unfilled in order to add an insight bonus equal to the spell's level on his next saving throw.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Ruthek's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or his illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Ruthek's *krau* power sigil grants a +2 bonus to Ruthek's caster level (included). His *vaul* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks (included).

Bard Spells Known (3/5/3 per day; caster level 7th): 0—*flare* (DC 17), *ghost sound* (DC 17), *message, open/close, read magic, summon instrument*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 18), *hypnotism, identify, silent image*; 2nd—*calm emotions, enthrall* (DC 19), *tongues*.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/8/7/6/4 per day; caster level 14th): 0—*acid splash, dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, light, mage hand, mending, ray of frost, resistance;* 1st—*disguise self, feather fall, magic missile, obscuring mist, shield;* 2nd—*arcane lock, detect thoughts* (DC 19), *glitterdust, knock, Melf's acid arrow;* 3rd—*fly, haste, lightning bolt* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 20); 4th—*charm monster* (DC 21), *fear* (DC 21), *scrying* (DC 21); 5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *teleport;* 6th—*geas/quest.*

Possessions: Cloak of Charisma +6, robe of the archmagi, ring of protection +2, scroll of *greater dispel magic* and *true seeing,* masterwork cold iron dagger.

Bloodwing Gulthau, Black Table

As the youngest illumian sitting among the cabal's leaders, Gulthau speaks for the Black Table. Unlike the other Bloodwings at the Black Table, Gulthau regularly observes rank-and-file members of the cabal going about their duties, and he makes it a point to consult with each of the cabal's directors daily.

Gulthau is a committed worshiper of Tarmuid, and he's quick to extol the virtues of a proper, cabal-comes-first attitude. He's also particularly keen on defensive measures for the cabal's enclave, because he saw combat firsthand during the war against the Graypeaks and he's not eager to do so again. Gulthau doesn't get along with Mulao the arbiter because he's annoyed with Mulao's persistent investigations that rarely result in charges and trials.

Bloodwing Gulthau: Illumian rogue 5/cleric 8; CR 13; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d6+5 plus 8d8+8; hp 66; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d6+1/18–20, *+1 rapier*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+1/18–20, *+1 rapier*); SA sneak attack +3d6, spells, turn undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+9, 8th); SQ evasion, glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +13; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 22, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +11, Jump +2, Knowledge (religion) +5, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +5, Spot +14, Tumble +12; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Negotiator, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Illumian.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Gulthau does an extra 3d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage applies to point-blank ranged attacks as well. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Gulthau may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Evasion (Ex): If Gulthau is exposed to any effect that normally allows him to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Gulthau interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Gulthau's combination of power sigils provides him with the *uurnaen* illumian word. During the time when he prepares his spells, he may choose to leave a 1st-level or 2nd-level spell slot unfilled in order to add an insight bonus equal to the spell's level on his next attack roll when making an unarmed strike or a sneak attack.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Gulthau's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or his illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Gulthau's *uur* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Dexterity checks and Dexterity-based skill checks (included). His *naen* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Intelligence checks and Intelligence-based skill checks (included).

Trapfinding (Ex): Gulthau can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Gulthau retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (he still loses his Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 8th): 0—*detect magic* (3), *light, mending, read magic;* 1st—*bless, comprehend languages, detect evil, divine favor, remove fear, sanctuary*[D], *shield of faith;* 2nd—*calm emotions*[D], *consecrate, hold person* (DC 18), *shield other, zone of truth,* one unfilled slot; 3rd—*daylight, dispel magic, magic circle against evil, protection from energy*[D], *remove curse;* 4th—*discern lies, divine power, order's wrath*[DL] (DC 20), *restoration.*

D: Domain spell. Domains: Law (cast lawful spells [L] at +1 caster level), Protection (protective ward grants +8 resistance bonus on next save, 1/day).

Possessions: +1 studded leather, +1 rapier, periapt of Wisdom +4, lesser strand of prayer beads, scroll of *cure critical wounds,* holy water and silver dust (for *consecrate* spell), two platinum rings (for *shield other* spell).

Bloodwing Kerrea, Eyes on Sumberton Director

Kerrea is the new director of the Eyes on Sumberton directorate, the largest of the Bloodwing Cabal's espionage directorates. She inherited the post after the previous director died under mysterious circumstances, and she

had endure one of arbiter Mulao's investigations as soon as she took office; he suspected that Kerrea eliminated her superior to attain his position.

Despite a rocky start, Kerrea has injected new vitality into her directorate, and she spends as much time visiting her agents and contacts in the city of Sumberton as she does in the Bloodwing enclave. The Bloodwings within her directorate are fiercely loyal to her, but the other directors regard her as somewhat reckless—and envy a director whose directorate consumes more than a "fair" share of the cabal's resources.

Bloodwing Kerrea: Illumian rogue 12; CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 12d6–12; hp 30; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +15 melee (1d4+2/17–20, *+1 returning dagger*) or +15 ranged (1d4+2/17–20, *+1 returning dagger*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d4+2/17–20, *+1 returning dagger*) or +15 ranged (1d4+2/17–20, *+1 returning dagger*); SA sneak attack +6d6; SQ evasion, glyphic resonance, illumian word, improved uncanny dodge, luminous sigils, power sigils, slippery mind, trapfinding, trap sense +4, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +13, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 20, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +10, Hide +27, Intimidate +4, Jump +10, Listen +16, Move Silently +27, Open Lock +17, Spot +16, Search +15, Tumble +24; Dodge, Improved Critical (dagger), Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Illumian.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Kerrea does an extra 6d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage applies to point-blank ranged attacks as well. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Kerrea may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with her sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Evasion (Ex): If Kerrea is exposed to any effect that normally allows her to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, she takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Kerrea interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Kerrea's combination of power sigils provides her with the *aeshuur* illumian word. When she deals damage to a target with a sneak attack or a critical hit, she gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC against that target until the beginning of her next turn.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Cannot be flanked and can only be sneak attacked by a character who has at least sixteen levels of rogue.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Kerrea's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. She can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or her illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Kerrea's *aesh* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks (included). Her *uur* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Dexterity checks and Dexterity-based skill checks (included).

Slippery Mind (Ex): Kerrea has a second chance to wriggle free from any enchantment spells and effects. Even if she has failed her initial Will save, she can roll the save again (same DC) the next round; she must abide by the results of the second save.

Trapfinding (Ex): Kerrea can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. She can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If her Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, she discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Kerrea retains her Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (she still loses her Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Possessions: +1 dagger of returning, +1 studded leather, gloves of Dexterity +2, cloak of elvenkind, boots of elvenkind, medallion of thoughts.

Bloodwing Mulao, Arbiter

Mulao has been the Bloodwing Cabal's arbiter for more than two decades, and he has twice spurned offers to join the Black Table. He's almost as old as Ruthek, but he uses a punishing regimen of calisthenics to keep himself in shape, often joining adolescent exercise classes or defense directorate weapons training.

Mulao has a deep reverence for illumian law, but he enjoys the investigative part of his job more than the exercise of judicial power. Mulao spends much of his time snooping around the enclave, asking questions of cabal members but rarely revealing exactly what or whom he's investigating. When it comes time to mete out punishment, Mulao simply looks up the relevant legal precedents and assigns a historically justifiable punishment, without regard to the specifics of the case.

A rumored spy within the Bloodwing cabal is Mulao's current obsession, and no Bloodwing is above suspicion. Mulao is contemplating setting up a "sting" operation where sensitive (and false) information is revealed to the cabal at large. When that information turns up beyond the enclave's wall, Mulao will have gained an important clue.

Bloodwing Mulao: Illumian paladin 2/cleric 9; CR 11; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+2 plus 9d8+9; hp 62; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base

Atk +8; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d10+8/×3, +1 *halberd*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+8/×3, +1 *halberd*); SA smite evil 1/day, spells, turn undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+10, 9th); SQ aura of good, *detect evil*, divine grace, glyphic resonance, illumian word, lay on hands 2/day, luminous sigils, power sigils; AL LG; SV Fort +11, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 20, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +3, Sense Motive +9, Search +2, Spellcraft +4; Investigator, Negotiator, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (halberd).

Languages: Common, Illumian.

Smite Evil (Su): One time per day, Mulao may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds +1 to his attack roll and deals an extra 2 points of damage.

Detect Evil (Sp): *Detect evil* at will, as the spell.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Mulao interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Mulao's combination of power sigils provides him with the *aeshkrau* illumian word, which lets him use Strength rather than Wisdom to determine his bonus cleric spells.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Mulao's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or his illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Mulao's *aesh* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks (included). His *krau* power sigil grants a +2 bonus to Mulao's caster level (included).

Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 11th): 0—*detect magic* (2), *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1st—*bless*, *cause fear* (DC 13), *comprehend languages*, *detect evil* (2), *divine favor*, *protection from chaos*[DL]; 2nd—*align weapon*, *calm emotions*[D], *find traps*, *hold person* (DC 14), *lesser restoration*, *zone of truth*; 3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against evil*[DG], *speak with dead*; 4th—*discern lies*, *dismissal* (DC 16), *divine power*, *holy smite*[DG] (DC 16); 5th—*dispel evil*[DG], *mark of justice*, *raise dead*.

Domain spell. Domains: Good (cast good spells [G] at +1 caster level), Law (cast lawful spells [L] at +1 caster level).

Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 halberd, +4 belt of giant strength, potion of fly, potion of haste, 5,000 gp in diamonds (for *raise dead* spell).

Illus. by D. Hudnut

Bloodwing Mulao tolerates no injustice, and has the might to back up his convictions

Bloodwing Thulech, Defense Subdirector

If Mulao rarely leaves the enclave walls, Thulech rarely enters them. The subdirector responsible for patrols of the forest that surrounds the Bloodwing enclave, Thulech and his red-furred wolf companion check up on the cabal's sentinels and observes the forest's denizens.

Recently Thulech has befriended a nymph druid in a nearby sacred grove. The nymph has offered to teach him druidic magic. Thulech knows it would be wrong to accept teaching from someone not of the cabal, but romantic feelings toward the nymph are clouding his otherwise sound judgment.

Bloodwing Thulech: Illumian ranger 5/fighter 4; CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d8 plus 4d10; hp 44; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+7, +1 *dire flail*) or +13 ranged (1d8+3/×3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+7, +1 *dire flail*) or +12/+7 melee (1d8+6, +1 *dire flail*) and +12 melee (1d8+4, +1 *dire flail*) or +13/+8 ranged (1d8+3/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA favored enemy: monstrous humanoid +4, goblinoid +2, spells; SQ

animal companion (wolf), animal companion benefits (link, share spells), glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigilswild empathy +6 (+2 magical beasts); AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +4, Hide +13, Jump +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Ride +7, Spot +11, Survival +13; Combat Expertise, Endurance[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dire flail), Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Track[B], Weapon Focus (dire flail), Weapon Specialization (dire flail).

Languages: Common, Illumian, Sylvan, Elven.

Illumian Sigils (Su): *Uur, hoon.* Thulech has the *uurhoon* ability, but doesn't have any spontaneous spellcasting and can't sacrifice spell slots.

Animal Companion (Ex): Thulech has a wolf as an animal companion (see *Monster Manual*, page 283).

Animal Companion Benefits (Ex): Thulech and his wolf companion enjoy the link and share spells special qualities.

Link (Ex): Thulech can handle his wolf as a free action. He also gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding his wolf.

Share Spells (Ex): Thulech can have any spell he casts on himself also affect his animal companion if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. The ranger may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on his animal companion.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Thulech interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Thulech's combination of power sigils provides him with the *uurhoon* illumian word, but since he only casts spells that he prepares, he can't yet make use of the extra ability the word normally grants.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Thulech's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or his illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Thulech's *uur* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Dexterity checks and Dexterity-based skill checks (included). His *hoon* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Wisdom checks, Constitution checks, and Wisdom- or Constitution-based skill checks (included).

Ranger Spell Prepared (caster level 5th): 1st—*longstrider.*

Possessions: +1 mithral chain shirt, +1 dire flail, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor +1, gloves of Dexterity +2.*

Bloodwing Zhaolei, Defense Trainee

Zhaolei is a typical young illumian, at home with either a book or a sword in her hand. She's recently been assigned to the defense directorate, where she mans the walls and engages in a seemingly unending sequence of combat drills.

Zhaolei isn't without ambitions of her own. She's keenly interested in the outside world, and she'd love to be assigned to one of Thulech's patrols. Even better, she'd love to travel beyond the forest on detached duty, gathering lore for the cabal and learning about far-off lands.

Bloodwing Zhaolei: Illumian bard 1/fighter 1; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6 plus 1d10; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk or Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +2 ranged (1d8+1/×3, composite longbow; SA spells; SQ bardic music 1/day, bardic knowledge +3, glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Craft (calligraphy) +4, Diplomacy +8, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Move Silently +5, Perform +8, Sense Motive +3; Combat Expertise, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Common, Illumian, Goblin, Elven.

Bardic Music: Use bardic music one time per day. See the bard class features, page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Countersong (Su): Use music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound.

Fascinate (Sp): Use music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with her.

Inspire Courage (Su): Use music or poetics to bolster her allies against fear and improve their combat abilities.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Zhaolei interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Zhaolei's combination of power sigils provides him with the *vaulaesh* illumian word, but since he only knows 0-level spells, he can't yet make use of the extra ability the word normally grants.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Zhaolei's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or his illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Zhaolei's *vaul* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks (included). His *aesh* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks (included).

Possessions: Masterwork longsword, composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork buckler, *potion of haste, potion of cure light wounds.*

Other Cabal Members

The Bloodwing cabal also counts among its membership the following NPCs. Most illumians are multiclass characters,

so the following list only provides the highest-level class for each character. It's safe to assume that Bloodwing illumians have roughly half as many levels in other classes.

Barbarians: None.

Bards: One 10th-level, two 5th-level, ten 2nd-level.

Clerics: One 11th-level, one 8th-level, four 3rd-level.

Druids: One 6th-level, one 4th-level.

Fighters: Three 8th-level, six 3rd-level, twelve 1st-level.

Monks: One 9th-level, four 4th-level, eight 2nd-level.

Paladins: Three 5th-level.

Rangers: One 6th-level, three 2nd-level, five 1st-level.

Rogues: One 11th-level, two 8th-level, four 5th-level, ten 1st-level.

Sorcerers: One 6th-level, three 2nd-level.

Wizards: One 9th-level, four 6th-level, eight 3rd-level.

Adepts: None.

Warriors: Twenty 1st-level.

Experts: Five 4th-level, ten 2nd-level, ten 1st-level.

ELIRHONDAS, SHADOW METROPOLIS

Only a small number of cabals contain more than a few hundred members, so the only dense accumulation of illumians in one place is the metropolis of Elirhondas. Created by representatives from hundreds of cabals, Elirhondas is a city nestled deep within the Plane of Shadow. Few travel there except at the invitation of an illumian who knows the way.

It's possible to reach Elirhondas by traveling to the Plane of Shadow and walking to the city. Many cabals have planar portals within their enclaves that connect to Elirhondas directly. Even cabals without access to powerful magic have access to an Elirhondas portal that briefly opens at regular intervals (once a month or four times a year, for example).

Because Elirhondas is made of shadowstuff, it can be a frightening place to visit. It's a black-and-white world, where everything gently twists and warps before a visitor's eyes. Even illumians who call Elirhondas home are occasionally startled by a particularly menacing bit of shadow—a door that momentarily appears to be a gaping maw, or a tower that looms so large in the sunless sky that it looks ready to topple over.

In theory, Tarmuid rules Elirhondas, but he is rarely seen there, preferring to remain within his fortress abode. In practice, Elirhondas is ruled like an overgrown cabal, with a twelve-member Black Table and directorates that handle city functions. Unlike most cabals, the Elirhondas cabal stays out of political matters, focusing entirely on the defense of the city and the well-being of its visitors.

Among the highlights of the city are the following locations.

Spinward Mountains: Elirhondas sits in the middle of a circle of shadow volcanoes. Each volcano spews a massive amount of shadow-stuff into the dark sky for about 2 minutes, then the next volcano in the ring (going clockwise) erupts for 2 minutes, and so on; the erupting shadows circle

the city every 30 minutes. The residents of Elirhondas use the eruptions of the Spinward Mountains as a massive public clock, and they direct visitors using "spinward" and "antispinward" rather than "right" and "left."

Castle of the Infinite Sigil: Tarmuid's personal abode, a massive gothic structure, sits at the center of the city. An ever-changing, glowing sigil hangs suspended above the castle's ramparts. The sequence of Illumian letters above the castle is usually random—or at least the pattern is too complex for even illumian sages to discern—but in times of crisis the glowing sigil spells out a message from Tarmuid to his faithful. No living illumian sets foot within the Castle of the Infinite Sigil unless expressly invited by Tarmuid. Such invitations are rarely offered.

Tombs of the Brave: Row after row of sarcophagi, each tomb bearing the carved likeness of an illumian hero, cover several city blocks in this neighborhood. The plaza is a monument to the illumians who fell defending the Library of the Sublime from githyanki raiders. It's also a common meeting place for illumians, especially those about to embark on a mission that advances the cause of their cabal or illumians in general.

Library of the New: Aulasha's clerics have selected this site to one day hold a replacement for the destroyed Library of the Sublime. Illumian builders determinedly raise new walls and buttresses, but construction goes slowly because the builders lack manpower, especially powerful spellcasters. While the library isn't done, books have already started arriving, both from the efforts of Aulasha's clerics and those of the quill cabals. Watchful sentinels stand guard over several temporary warehouses full of tomes on the site.

Boulevard of Doors: Hundreds of cabals have planar portals that link to Elirhondas. The other side of those portals is almost always a door on the walls that mark the boundaries of this wide boulevard. The Boulevard of Doors bustles at all times, because travelers constantly pass through on the way to and from the Material Plane cabals. This is the busiest street in Elirhondas; the air is vibrant with the cries of barking street vendors, the low voices of conspirators, and the low rumble of the erupting shadow volcanoes in the distance.

Elirhondas Enclave: The civil administration of Elirhondas is set up like a cabal—albeit one with more than a thousand members. The cabal's Black Table meets in the walled compound in this quarter of the city, and the directorates (defense, justice, maintenance, and so on) keep their offices here as well.

Chambers of the Sleepers: Some of Elirhondas's original builders returned to their cabals when the city was complete,

The Tombs of the Brave in Elirhondas

Illus. by W. England

while others took up residence in the city permanently. Several dozen, worried about the city's long-term survival, opted for a third choice. They lie in suspended animation within these chambers, ready to be awakened by the city's Black Table if the githyanki or another enemy threatens Elirhondas to the point where its living residents cannot defend it. That day has not yet come, but inhabitants of the city sleep easier knowing that dozens of powerful wizards and other high-level heroes can be awakened at a moment's notice to defend the illumians of Elirhondas.

Elirhondas (Large City): Conventional; AL LN; population 22,000 adults (varies widely); 40,000 gp limit (100,000 gp for spellbooks and magic items that take book, scroll, or other written form); Isolated (95% illumian, 2% human, 1% half-elf, 1% githzerai, 1% other).

Authority Figures: Black Table councilor Chaosei, illumian wizard 17; High priest Eltau, illumian cleric 16; shadow sentinel† General Sheokru, paladin 8/shadow sentinel 10.

† New prestige class described on page 137.

CREATING ILLUMIAN CHARACTERS

Illumian characters obey all the rules for characters described in the *Player's Handbook*. As an illumian, you'll want to consider carefully the power sigils you choose at 1st and 2nd level. Once you've studied the available options, you'll notice that only a few of the illumian words (the combinations of two power sigils) are particularly effective for any one class. That's one reason why many mid- to high-level illumian characters are multiclass characters; they're exercising the maximum benefit from the power sigils that float around their heads. Look carefully at the combinations offered among the power sigils, since they make certain multiclass choices particularly attractive.

SPECIAL ILLUMIAN OPTIONS

As an illumian character, you qualify for some illumian-specific feats and prestige classes unavailable to PCs of other races, all described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this book.

Feats: Bright Sigil, Enhanced Power Sigils, Human Heritage, Improved Power Sigil (*Aesh*), Improved Power Sigil (*Hoon*), Improved Power Sigil (*Krau*), Improved Power Sigil (*Naen*), Improved Power Sigil (*Uur*), Improved Power Sigil (*Vaul*), Subtle Sigil.

Prestige Classes: Loredelver, shadow sentinel.

ILLUMIANS AS CHARACTERS

Because illumians have the versatility of their human forebears, they take easily to any class.

Barbarian: Barbarians are very rare in illumian society, but members of gibber cabals find that they're able to channel their rage to potent effect. The *aesh* power sigil is a good choice for illumian barbarians.

Bard: Illumian society holds words—whether written, spoken, or sung—in high regard; after all, illumians are literally made of words. Some illumian bards are musicians, but the storytellers and orators are more common among illumians than wandering minstrels. Several power sigils make good options for bards, particularly the *naen*, *uur*, and *vaul* power sigils.

Cleric: Illumian clerics divide their devotions between the race's pantheon, abstract philosophy, and human gods (especially Boccob and Vecna). The *hoon* and *vaul* power sigils vie equally for popularity among illumian clerics.

Druid: Root cabals include many druids, who as a class are rare in other types of cabals. As with clerics, both the *hoon* and *vaul* power sigils are common among druids.

Fighter: Illumians make a lot of enemies with their plotting and spying, so cabals insist that members have at least a bit of combat training. Illumian fighters typically prefer the *aesh* or *uur* power sigils, depending on whether they favor brute force or agility.

Monk: The illumian race was founded in a monastery, so it's no surprise that monks still number highly among the race today. The *uur* power sigil enhances an illumian monk's acrobatic and stealth abilities, but the *hoon* and *aesh* power sigils are useful as well.

Paladin: While illumians are famous for their subtle plots, they also need questing crusaders from time to time. Illumian paladins are rare, but they feel their sigils mark them as Tarmuid's own champions. Illumian paladins choose power sigils based on their specific talents—the *aesh*, *hoon*, *krau*, and *vaul* power sigils are all common.

Ranger: The combination of skills and combat prowess that the ranger class offers makes it attractive to illumians. The class's particular approach to solving problems directs the illumian ranger's choice of power sigils, with *aesh*, *hoon*, *krau*, and *uur* all providing benefits.

Rogue: With the amount of spying and covert activities that a cabal performs, the abilities and skills of a rogue are in high demand. Illumian rogues typically choose from the *hoon*, *naen*, *uur*, and *vaul* power sigils, though more physically oriented rogues select the *aesh* power sigil.

Sorcerer: While it's a relatively rare occurrence, some illumians have a gift for instinctive magic and become sorcerers. Sorcerers with the *vaul* sigil are particularly persuasive, though a few prefer to augment their talents with the *hoon*, *naen*, or *uur* power sigil.

Wizard: Along with rogue and bard, wizard is the most common class chosen by illumians, for what other class provides its own book full of arcane secrets? The *naen* power sigil fits perfectly into the wizard's role as the master of knowledge.

Multiclass Characters: The illumian race combines classes as well or better than any other race, and every combination has its own best options for power sigils. Multiclass spellcasters consistently pick up the *krau* power sigil.

Illus. by C. Lukacs

While rarely the first race to appear on any given world, humans soon established their dominance in numerous lands across the multiverse. A remarkable variety of human-descended races (such as half-elves and half-orcs) and creatures associated with humanity has arisen, perhaps as a natural result of humans sharing territory with magic and other humanoids. While these races don't always have an overt connection to humans, they're usually found living in human cultures.

USING THIS CHAPTER

The races described here are presented as an option for PCs as alternate character races. These races also give the Dungeon Master new options when building foes to confront the characters. Sly doppelgangers, friendly mongrelfolk, violent skulks, and secretive underfolk inhabit the world around the characters and sometimes become heroes themselves, while remaining unknown to the general populace.

MONSTER CLASSES

Some of the races described in this chapter use the monster class rules detailed in *Savage Species*. You don't necessarily need that book to use these classes. Monster classes work just like other classes, with the following exceptions.

- When using monster classes to create a character, you can ignore level adjustment. This is replaced by the character's monster class level. (The level adjustment is, in effect, built into the monster class's level progression.)
- The only way to take a level of a monster class is to be that monster. A doppelganger cannot multiclass as a skulk, nor can a human fighter multiclass to take levels as a doppelganger. She must begin taking levels in the monster class at 1st level.
- Monster classes do not grant a character skill points or Hit Dice at every level, nor do they grant a feat every three levels. When a level grants skill points, a Hit Die, or a feat, the gain is noted on the class table.
- Each monster class has a CR (Challenge Rating) column. This has no meaning for players or PCs and is given only as an aid to DMs who want to adjust monster CRs by regressing existing creatures.
- A monster character using a monster class cannot multiclass until she completes the full progression

This aasimar conceals her true nature beneath bulky clothing and a large-brimmed hat

Illus. by E. Cox

in her monster class. This rule keeps characters from gaining the benefits of a monster's type and then quickly switching to a standard class. However, a DM may explicitly waive this rule (officially declaring a variant ruling) if he desires a slightly higher-powered campaign.

- A monster class does not impose an experience penalty for multiclassing, as other classes do.

AASIMAR

Graceful, regal, and noble, aasimars are the distant descendants of a coupling between a human and a good-aligned outsider. While nowhere near as powerful as their celestial forebears, aasimars still retain a touch of the divine in their blood and wear it with pride. Devoted champions of good, aasimars spend their days fighting evil in whatever form it takes.

In a world of violence, injustice, and evil, aasimars are on the front lines, lending their abilities where needed. Some try to stave off evil by teaching and leading by example in the fight against ignorance, prejudice, and greed. Others present an aloof and lofty demeanor, an intimidating aura that, while noble, keeps people from trying to get too close. Among good people, aasimars are held in high opinion as a standard by which all should live, while those of an evil nature view aasimars as self-righteous and dangerously moralistic.

Personality: Aasimars practically radiate good will and a positive attitude. Most aasimars are kind, pleasant, and approachable. However, some project a crusading zeal and sense of purpose that can be daunting and unapproachable—hearkening to the vengeful, judgmental aspect of their celestial ancestor. Few aasimars crave the limelight, and they shun positions of authority, except in instances where they can lead by example.

Physical Description: From a distance, aasimars appear as standard humans. Up close, their celestial bloodline shines through in their tall stature and attractive features. Some bear a minor physical trait that highlights their celestial nature, such as silver or golden hair, metallic eyes, or a rich, melodic voice. Humanoids find aasimars aesthetically pleasing and watch them with admiration.

Relations: Aasimars maintain excellent relations with beings of good alignment. They are found primarily among humans, but they also associate with elves, dwarves, and good-aligned humanoids. They are extremely stern and disapproving toward evil beings of all kind and do not willingly deal with

orcs, goblins, and other races noted for their evil alignment. Aasimars are extremely suspicious of half-orcs, but they can overlook blood or upbringing if an individual proves that he leads a life of good and honor.

Aasimars treat one another with respect and friendship, seeing other aasimars as cousins united in the cause of good. However, if they encounter an aasimar who has fallen to evil, they become frightful to behold in their anger and righteous indignation.

Alignment: Blood infused with the power of the celestial realms virtually guarantees that aasimars are good in alignment, although individuals vary wildly in their interpretation and may favor lawful or chaotic behavior. In extremely rare instances, an aasimar turns from good, becoming neutral or even evil. Fallen aasimars live as hunted beings, reviled by their own kind for betraying the blood the flows in their veins.

Aasimar Lands: Aasimars are relatively few in number and do not hold any lands of their own. Most are loners, wandering from place to place and providing aid and good deeds when needed. Others integrate themselves more thoroughly into human society, although their predilection for action and good deeds means that they rarely take up a sedentary vocation.

Religion: The indisputable fact of their celestial ancestry leads aasimars to become deeply devoted beings who feel a personal connection with a particular deity. Even those who do not become paladins (their favored class) are profoundly religious and forthright in their faith. While they are not prone to proselytizing, by words and action aasimars show the power and righteousness of their deity to those who have not yet seen the light and truth that they experience themselves.

Language: Aasimars speak Common and have an intuitive understanding of Celestial from birth. Aasimars learn a variety of languages to assist them as they wander the world in their quest for good.

Names: Aasimars are given names appropriate for the area and society in which they were raised. The majority, raised by human parents, bear human names. Some adopt a more celestial-sounding name on reaching adulthood to demonstrate their devotion to their deity and to the cause of good.

Male Names: Exelar, Henzio, Mortibal, Overmar, Sentalial, Vitarri.

Female Names: Alleraia, Eretri, Irethia, Marethial, Savial, Terim.

Adventurers: Aasimars readily take to the adventuring lifestyle. Many become paladins, acting as righteous tools of their deity. Clerics are nearly as common, followed by fighters. Lawful aasimars find a monk's discipline very appealing. Blessed with a naturally high Charisma, some aasimars become sorcerers and bards. Aasimars dislike the pragmatic deceitfulness of rogues, and barbarian aasimars are almost unheard of.

AASIMAR RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma: Aasimars inherit a measure of the insight and presence of their celestial forebears.
- Outsider (native): Aasimars are outsiders who are native to the Material Plane. Unlike true outsiders, native outsiders need to eat and sleep.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, aasimars have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Aasimar base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Aasimars can see in the dark out to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and aasimars can function just fine with no light at all.
- Daylight (Sp): An aasimar can use *daylight* once per day as a 1st-level caster or a caster of her class level, whichever is higher.
- Resistance to acid 5, cold 5, and electricity 5: Aasimars gain a slight resistance to acid, cold, and electricity from their celestial blood.
- +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks: Aasimars have keen senses.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Celestial. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, and Sylvan. Aasimars enjoy learning languages that enable them to communicate with good creatures.
- Favored Class: Paladin. The paladin class levels of an aasimar who becomes an ex-paladin class do not count when determining whether she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- Level adjustment +1.

DOPPELGANGER

Scholars have debated for centuries about the origin of the doppelgangers. Shadowy, mysterious, and enigmatic, these shapeshifters learned long ago how to integrate themselves into human society. For this reason, learned men and women believe that doppelgangers were once human. How doppelgangers gained their unique abilities is unknown, even to themselves.

Doppelgangers do not have a society of their own. They fill any desire for companionship and social interaction through their association with other races. Although doppelgangers act independently, following their own motivations and goals, rumors persist of a "secret cabal" of elder doppelgangers who desire nothing less than control of the world. Little evidence corroborates these rumors, which may have been perpetuated by the doppelgangers themselves to lend even more mystery to their race's reputation.

Personality: Discerning a doppelganger's true personality is akin to grasping quicksilver, although certain traits seem to be common among members of the race. In their natural form, doppelgangers are cold, mysterious, and aloof, and almost never give any indication what they are actu-

ally feeling or thinking. Doppelgangers are natural liars, and even allies wonder at the validity of a doppelganger's acknowledgment of an emotional state.

While in disguise, doppelgangers behave according to the personality of the mimicked humanoid. Because they can only imitate a creature's physical form, not emotional or psychological qualities, doppelgangers watch their quarry from afar for as long as possible, getting every idiosyncrasy, nuance, and personality trait down pat before assuming the creature's form.

Doppelgangers feel the same basic desires as members of any other race, but more than anything, they wish to simply "belong" to a group, even if for just a short while. Doppelgangers use their abilities as a test of their own cunning and superiority, and they believe that they succeed only when they remain completely unnoticed by the race they are trying to mimic. Clinically curious, doppelgangers seek to understand a race by becoming part of that race for a while, before moving on to infiltrate another, more challenging group.

Physical Description: In their natural form, doppelgangers are gaunt, gray-skinned, genderless humanoids with long, gangly limbs, standing around 5-1/2 feet tall and weighing about 150 pounds. Doppelganger bodies are slender and frail-looking, although this appearance belies their hardy constitution and natural agility. Their heads are large in proportion to the rest of their bodies, and their faces are featureless except for two large, octopoidlike eyes.

Doppelgangers are rarely seen in their true form, and spend most of their time mimicking other humanoids. A doppelganger can only duplicate the appearance of a humanoid and does not gain any special abilities of a mimicked race, such as an elf's low-light vision. Its ability to duplicate another form is remarkable, and it can copy a humanoid form to the minutest detail. Doppelgangers have an incredible memory when it comes to retaining forms, and a doppelganger can remember any shape it has mimicked, even if it was years in the past.

Relations: Either despite or because of their shapeshifting nature, doppelgangers do not have strong relations with other races. They view all humanoid races with the same level of neutrality, heavily influenced by contempt. Doppelgangers consider themselves superior to other humanoid races, although they rarely espouse this viewpoint while dealing with the races in question. They see humanoids as mere pawns to be deceived and used in whatever manner seems necessary at the time. On the other hand, most doppelgangers do not have any preconceived notions about a race—they all have their positive and negative qualities, and none are any better or worse in comparison (except for doppelgangers themselves, of course).

In turn, other races are extremely suspicious of a creature that can assume their own forms and blend in with impunity. In some places, doppelgangers have thoroughly infiltrated positions of authority, using their newfound power in whatever way they see fit. When a doppelganger is discovered, pogroms and witch-hunts inevitably follow, as the panicked populace accuses anyone and everyone of being a shapeshifter.

Alignment: Because they live according to the borrowed morals and ethics of other races, doppelgangers are usually neutral in alignment, with no strong opinions on the properties of good, evil, law, or chaos. Doppelgangers regularly "portray" creatures of

Illus. by M. Phillippi

A doppelganger infiltrator decides it's time for a change

different alignments, although their psyches are amazingly toughened to resist any permanent shift from acting in such a manner. They retain their own objectivity regardless of the intensity of emotions that they exhibit on the surface. On occasion, doppelgangers stray from the racial norm of neutrality—and their inclination toward duplicity and deceit means that most of these individuals fall to evil.

Doppelganger Lands: Doppelgangers have no lands that they openly declare as their own. However, they consider all the lands of the other races free for the taking. Doppelgangers with a longing for power simply overthrow an authority figure and assume his or her place instead of trying to garner power from the ground up.

Religion: Doppelgangers lack religious conviction. They understand why a race would worship a higher being, although they do not feel much desire to propitiate a deity. For this reason, doppelganger clerics are exceedingly rare, despite the fact that doppelgangers occasionally masquerade as members of the clergy for one church or another. Of all the deities, Boccob, the Uncaring God of Magic, is most likely to hold a doppelganger's attention, if only because of his neutral attitude.

Language: Doppelgangers have no language of their own and communicate among themselves by means of their detect thoughts ability. Doppelgangers learn a multitude of languages to lend credence to their disguises. Their mastery of shapechanging carries over to speech, and they can imitate particular accents with ease.

Names: To a doppelganger, a name is just another "prop" to be used in its disguise. A doppelganger uses hundreds of names throughout its lifetime, although none of those names can truly be said to "belong" to that individual. Still, each doppelganger does have a single, unique name, which is almost never used. Doppelganger names are derived from an ancient human language that died millennia ago, giving further weight to the theory that they descended from human origins. Since doppelgangers lack distinct gender, there are no male or female variations in naming.

Doppelganger Names: Ansilikus, Melanuxor, Sanjakilar, Tepilmurae, Verenkilar, Xestilophon.

Adventurers: Naturally stealthy and deceptive, doppelganger adventurers favor the rogue class. Doppelganger bards number a close second. Those who spend a great deal of time mimicking warriors become fighters or rangers. As mentioned above, doppelganger clerics are notoriously rare, and druids even more so, mainly because doppelgangers are so focused on social intricacies that they barely think about the natural world. Doppelganger paladins are one in a million, and are viewed with considerable suspicion by the rest of their race.

DOPPELGANGER RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +4 Wisdom, +2 Charisma: Doppelgangers have improved their minds and bodies through centuries of mimicking humanoid forms.
- Monstrous Humanoid (Shapechanger): Doppelgangers are monstrous humanoids with the shapechanger subtype. They retain this type and subtype regardless of any humanoid form they may assume.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, doppelgangers have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Doppelganger base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Doppelgangers can see in the dark out to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and doppelgangers can function just fine with no light at all.
- Racial Hit Dice: A doppelganger begins with four levels of monstrous humanoid, which provide 4d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +4, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +1, Ref +4, and Will +4
- Racial Skills: A doppelganger's monstrous humanoid levels give it skill points equal to 7 × (2 + Int modifier). Its class skills are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).
- Racial Feats: A doppelganger's monstrous humanoid levels give it two feats.
- +4 natural armor bonus: Doppelganger skin is resilient and tough.
- +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks: Doppelgangers have a talent for deception. When using its change shape ability, a doppelganger gets an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If it can read an opponent's mind, it gets a further +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.

Table 4–1: The Doppelganger **Hit Die: d8**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	HD	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	CR	Special
1st	+1	1d8	+0	+2	+2	(2 + Int mod) × 4	1	+2 Con, immunity to *sleep* and charm effects, feat
2nd	+1	1d8	+0	+2	+2		1	+2 Wis, +1 natural armor, detect thoughts
3rd	+2	2d8	+1	+3	+3	2 + Int mod	2	+2 Cha, change shape (1/day)
4th	+2	2d8	+1	+3	+3		2	+2 Dex, +1 natural armor,
5th	+3	3d8	+1	+3	+3	2 + Int mod	3	+2 Int, change shape (3/day), feat
6th	+3	3d8	+1	+3	+3		3	+2 Str, +1 natural armor
7th	+4	4d8	+1	+4	+4	2 + Int mod	4	+2 Wis
8th	+4	4d8	+1	+4	+4		4	+1 natural armor, change shape (unlimited)

- Detect Thoughts (Su): A doppelganger uses detect thoughts as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 13 negates). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.
- Change Shape (Su): A doppelganger can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. In humanoid form, the doppelganger loses its natural attacks. A doppelganger can remain in its humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but a doppelganger reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell or ability reveals its natural form.
- Immunities: A doppelganger is immune to *sleep* and charm effects.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Auran, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Giant, and Terran.
- Favored Class: Rogue. A multiclass doppelganger's rogue class does not count when determining whether it takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- Level adjustment: +4.

DOPPELGANGER MONSTER CLASS

Monstrous Humanoid (Shapechanger)

If you want to play a doppelganger at 1st level, you can use the doppelganger monster class. To use the monster class, generate your character with the racial traits given below (rather than the doppelganger racial traits presented above), and then take levels in the doppelganger class as you would levels of other classes. For more information on monster classes, see the Monster Classes section at the beginning of this chapter.

As the ultimate infiltrators and spies, doppelgangers may seem like the perfect choice for players who enjoy stealthy and deceptive characters. Extremely well rounded and adaptable with excellent natural armor, doppelgangers excel at any class, although their lack of moral or ethical conviction hinders them from becoming clerics or paladins.

A doppelganger begins play with relatively few abilities: immunity to *sleep* and charm effects, a Constitution bonus, and two good saving throws. As it advances in level, a doppelganger learns how to detect thoughts, receives increases in its ability scores, and ultimately acquires the change shape ability that defines the race. This ability comes to them slowly, however, and young doppelgangers keep a low profile until they reach their full strength.

Racial Traits at 1st Level

- Starting Ability Score Adjustments: +2 Constitution. Even young doppelgangers are exceptionally hardy.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, doppelgangers have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Speed: Doppelganger base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Doppelgangers can see in the dark out to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and doppelgangers can function just fine with no light at all.
- Immunity to *sleep* and charm effects
- Automatic Language: Common.

Class Skills

A doppelganger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the doppelganger monster class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Doppelgangers are proficient with all simple weapons, but have no proficiency with any armor or shield.

Natural Armor: A doppelganger gains a +1 natural armor bonus at 2nd level. This bonus improves by 1 every two levels thereafter, up to +4 at 8th level.

Detect Thoughts (Su): At 2nd level, a doppelganger can detect thoughts, as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 10 negates).

Change Shape (Su): At 3rd level, a doppelganger becomes able to assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. A doppelganger can change its shape once per day at 3rd level (but can revert to its normal form at any time), three times per day at 5th level, and an unlimited number of times per day at 8th level. In humanoid form, a doppelganger loses its natural attacks. A doppelganger can remain in its humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but a doppelganger reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell or ability reveals its natural form.

HALF-OGRE

The same wild frontiers that produce half-orcs from unions between tribes of human and orc barbarians also produce half-ogres. Ogres and humans fight in times of war and trade in times of peace. In peaceful times, ogres value humans' intelligence and adaptability, while humans value ogres' strength and toughness. Half-ogres inherit a blend of the physical characteristics of their parents. They may be found in either parent's community (where their status varies according to local sentiment).

Personality: Half-ogres are generally low in intelligence but quick to anger. Where a half-orc understands alternatives to action, half-ogres do not. Successful half-ogres are those with enough self-control to live in a civilized land.

Half-ogres love simple pleasures such as feasting, drinking, boasting, wrestling, drumming, and wild dancing. While some claim to be able to sing, few other races would agree. A half-ogre is likely to assume that refined enjoyments

such as poetry, courtly dancing, and philosophy are just tools for making fun of him.

Physical Description: Half-ogres are taller than humans or half-orcs, but not as tall as ogres. Adults are typically closer to the height and weight of an ogre than of a human. Their skin color ranges from dull yellow to dull brown.

This half-ogre barbarian gets a charge out of combat

Illus. by R. Spencer

Their thick hides sport patches of dark, warty bumps, and their heads are topped by a mop of dark hair.

Relations: Because they are the offspring of giants, half-ogres have a rough time getting along with dwarves and gnomes. Of course, ogres are rarely on good terms with elves, humans, or halflings either. On the other hand, they understand the prejudice that half-orcs experience and relate well to them.

A half-ogre seeks a way to gain acceptance from those who hate or fear his ogre cousins. Most exploit their innate toughness so that others have no choice but to accept them, whether out of admiration or fear. A few demonstrate piety and good-heartedness as publicly as they can (whether or not such displays are genuine).

Alignment: Half-ogres inherit a tendency toward chaos from their ogre parents, but, like their human parents, they favor neither good nor evil. Half-ogres raised among ogres and willing to live out their lives with them, however, tend toward evil.

Half-Ogre Lands: Half-ogres have no lands of their own, living among ogres or humans depending on their circumstances and the tolerance of the locals.

Religion: Like ogres, evil half-ogres worship Vaprak the Destroyer. The rapacious Vaprak is a chaotic evil deity of combat, destruction, aggression, frenzy, and greed. His domains include Chaos, Destruction, Evil, and War, and his favored weapon is the greatclub. Half-ogre barbarians and fighters revere him as a war god even if they are not evil themselves. Erythnul also numbers ogres and half-ogres among his followers. Worshipers of Vaprak or Erythnul who are tired of explaining themselves, or who don't want to give other races yet another reason to distrust them, simply don't make their religion public knowledge. Half-ogres who want to solidify their connection to their human heritage follow human deities, and they may be outspoken in their shows of piety.

Language: Giant, which has no alphabet of its own, uses Dwarven script on the rare occasions when an ogre needs to write something.

Names: A half-ogre typically chooses a name that helps him make a specific impression. If he wants to fit in among humans, he chooses a human name. If he wants to intimidate others, he chooses a guttural ogre name. A half-ogre raised entirely by humans has a human given name, but he might choose another name once he is away from his hometown. Some half-ogres, of course, are not quite bright enough to choose a name this carefully. Ogre names are similar enough to orc names that players may choose from the orc lists (see Half-Orcs, page 18 of the *Player's Handbook*) when making their characters.

Adventurers: Half-ogres living among humans are drawn almost invariably toward violent careers in which they can put their strength to good use. Frequently shunned from polite company, half-ogres find acceptance and friendship among adventurers, many of whom are fellow wanderers and outsiders.

Half-Ogre Racial Traits

- +6 Strength, –2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, –2 Intelligence, –2 Charisma: Half-ogres are big, brawny creatures without a great deal of intelligence or couth.
- Giant: Half-ogres are creatures with the giant type.
- Large: As Large creatures, half-ogres take a –1 penalty to Armor Class and a –1 penalty on all attack rolls. They also have a reach of 10 feet.

- Half-ogre base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Half-ogres can see in the dark out to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and half-ogres can function just fine with no light at all.
- Natural Armor: Half-ogres have +4 natural armor due to their tough, thick skin.
- Automatic Languages: Giant and Common. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Gnoll, Goblin, Orc, and Abyssal. Smart half-ogres (who are rare) learn the languages of their allies or rivals.
- Favored Class: Barbarian. A multiclass half-ogre's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- Level adjustment +2.

MONGRELFOLK

Those people who have heard of mongrelfolk know them as brutish, ugly creatures who bear the worst features of all their parent races.

And that is exactly how the mongrelfolk like it.

In actuality, mongrelfolk can pass for members of their parent races—any of them. In fact, when someone meets a mongrelfolk, he always assumes the new acquaintance is a member of one of the other major humanoid races—just not his own. Dwarves see mongrelfolk as unusually tall and broad-shouldered elves, while elves might consider them to be surprisingly tall and slender dwarves. Orcs view them as oddly short and ugly humans, while humans might see them as tall and strangely comely orcs. To each race, a mongrelfolk looks like a member of another race, because they have features common to several species. Mongrelfolk use this inability to pin down their ancestry to their advantage. After all, it is difficult to describe the culprit of a crime if a witness cannot even identify her race with certainty.

Those few mongrelfolk who are born with clearly nonhuman features serve as a distraction from the rest of the race. They grow up knowing that they will be spat upon by the other races, but secretly honored by their own kin. These visibly misshapen mongrelfolk make sure that people in the area know who they are and where they are, thus reinforcing the stereotype about their race in general. In such a situation, ordinary-appearing mongrelfolk are often able to move about more freely, because no one associates the slightly tall dwarf or slightly stocky elf with the hideously deformed creature hiding in the woods nearby.

Illus. by E. Polak

A mongrelfolk rogue on the prowl

Personality: Mongrelfolk grow up knowing that they do not belong to one particular race, but are kin to all of them. They are perhaps the most open-minded of the humanoid races in terms of dealing with each other—mongrelfolk see nothing wrong with having orc friends, any more than they have problems allying with dwarves or elves or gnomes. They treat every race as equals and as distant cousins and hope to be treated the same way in return. To facilitate this goal, mongrelfolk learn how to imitate the other races. They practice archery and woodcraft to be more like elves, stonework to be more like dwarves, and cooking to be more similar to halflings.

The race's real talents lie in the area of stealth. Mongrelfolk are naturally sneaky, expert at vanishing into a crowd. They hone these skills, working to become quieter and quicker and less obtrusive, and their familiarity with different races makes this task even easier.

Physical Description: Mongrelfolk range in height from a little under 5 feet to almost 6 feet tall, and they weigh between 125 and 230 pounds. Their skin ranges from pale to dark, perhaps with gray or pink undertones, and their hair ranges from fine to coarse and black to white-blond. They usually have large green or brown eyes, which can be dark or pale or (as is often the case) indeterminate enough to look dark in shadow but pale in bright light. Their ears are slightly upswept and come to mild points at the upper tips, and they usually have heavy brows and jaws. Mongrelfolk favor simple, functional clothing and rarely wear jewelry.

Relations: Mongrelfolk get along extremely well with the other humanoid races, for two reasons. First, the mongrelfolk themselves appreciate each race's unique traits and culture, and they enjoy meeting and mingling

with people. Second, other races never realize mongrelfolk are among them, taking each mongrelfolk instead for a member of another race. This allows the mongrelfolk to move freely through the world, avoiding any racial bias and giving none in return. Mongrelfolk are perhaps closer to half-elves than to any other race, because half-elves can also be mistaken for a member of one of their two parent races. Mongrelfolk feel a degree of pity toward half-orcs and half-ogres, who are clearly not human and are persecuted for their differences.

Alignment: Mongrelfolk tend toward neutrality and chaos. They live their lives by their own standards, preferring to follow instinct rather than rules. Mongrelfolk lean more toward good than evil, simply because they know that helping others earns them more respect from the world at large. But some decide that since no other race fully accepts them, they should not care what happens to anyone else, and they focus entirely upon their own welfare and prosperity, even to the point of harming others to achieve their goals.

Mongrelfolk Lands: Mongrelfolk do not claim their own lands, and deliberately so. Their race focuses on blending in with other races, and so they carefully establish small communities within a variety of lands, preferably in large villages or cities where their presence will not be noticed. Mongrelfolk establish their largest populations in human cities because humanity contains a great variance of appearance. Human cities also generally support a racially mixed population, giving the mongrelfolk even more cover. Those mongrelfolk who are visibly nonhuman can usually be found within a day's ride of such places, and they live within caves and swamps close enough to a major road that travelers can see and hear of them.

Religion: Mongrelfolk worship their own god, Meriadar. The deity appears as a humanoid with an elf's ears, a dwarf's nose, a human's chin, an orc's jaw, and a gnome's eyes. His height, weight, build, and coloring shift from second to second, making it impossible to pin down his true features. Meriadar encourages his people to use their ability to blend in among the other races, and to remember that they represent the ultimate result of a mixed society. His priests teach mongrelfolk the ways of each parent race, help establish and maintain their hidden communities, and see to the welfare of the misshapen mongrelfolk set out as distractions from the rest. Meriadar expects open-mindedness and compassion from his worshipers, and an attempt to meet and befriend members of every parent race.

Language: Mongrelfolk speak Common. Many also speak Elven, Dwarven, Gnome, Halfling, Orc, or several of the above. Mongrelfolk have their own pidgin language, known appropriately enough as Mongrel, but they only use this when other races are watching.

Names: Mongrelfolk pick their names from those used by other races, and they take care to use names that sound close to those of several different races. They adopt different last names or clan names depending on what race they encounter. A mongrelfolk's clan name is used as a middle name, staying constant no matter what disguise the individual uses. Mongrelfolk clan names are one syllable in length, and can easily sound like the first portion of a last name, allowing a mongrelfolk to utter his clan name and then the fictitious one after it, and thereby identify himself to any mongrelfolk nearby.

Male Names: Andion, Austen, Caden, Elzedar, Haraze, Jerain, Michel, Randal, Tahriol, Winden.

Female Names: Betra, Candace, Deliah, Esthel, Gerta, Jenemia, Lissende, Marte, Safire, Vendela.

Clan Names: Bar, Cam, Del, Fir, Gav, Lim, Mon, Nek, Pul, Ras.

Adventurers: Mongrelfolk love meeting people and seeing new places. They particularly enjoy visiting places where no one knows them, and where they can start fresh without having to worry about anyone determining their real ancestry. Mongrelfolk also like spending time with their parent races, studying each culture and trying to fit into it or least learn how to prosper within it.

Ultimately, mongrelfolk prefer traveling to settling down. They roam from place to place, plying a craft such as tinkering or carpentry that earns them respect and coin wherever they go and also provides them a good cover for their excursions. Mongrelfolk have a natural gift for stealth and thieving; though not all become rogues, they keep an eye open for any wealth that might be had, both for themselves and for their families back home.

MONGRELFOLK RACIAL TRAITS

- +4 Constitution, –2 Intelligence, –4 Charisma: Mongrelfolk are hardy, but they lack proper education and others find their appearance repulsive or at least vaguely unsettling.
- Humanoid (human): Mongrelfolk are humanoid creatures with the human subtype.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, mongrelfolk have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Mongrelfolk base land speed is 30 feet.
- Low-Light Vision: Mongrelfolk can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Emulate Race (Ex): Because of their radically mixed heritage, mongrelfolk can use magic items that only function for a user of a certain race. This ability works like the emulate race function of the Use Magic Device skill. A mongrelfolk can automatically emulate any humanoid race, with no need for a skill check. Mongrelfolk who have the Use Magic Device skill have a +4 racial bonus on attempts to emulate nonhumanoid races using that skill.

- Sound Imitation (Ex): A mongrelfolk can mimic any voice or sound she has heard. Listeners must succeed on a DC 16 Will save to detect the ruse.
- Immunity to *sleep* spells and similar magical effects.
- Diffuse Blood: Mongrelfolk gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against any spell that targets a particular race or ignores a particular race, provided the selected race is part of their general ancestry (human, halfling, dwarf, elf, gnome, goblin, or orc).
- +1 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells or effects and illusion spells or effects.
- +1 racial bonus on saving throws against poison.
- +1 racial bonus on Appraise, Climb, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Search, and Spot checks.
- +4 racial bonus on Hide and Sleight of Hand checks.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Any.
- Favored Class: Rogue. A multiclass mongrelfolk's rogue class does not count when determining whether she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- Level adjustment +0.

SEA KIN

Humans have always held an affinity for the sea. Long ago, it is said, some returned to its watery embrace and live beneath the waves to this day. Others believe the sea kin came into being through the intermingling of seallike fey or magical hybridization, since they display traits found in mammals that live in watery environments.

Sea kin live in shoals and coral reefs adjacent to the shore, although rumors persist of colonies that have taken to the open sea. Sea kin towns are wondrous to behold, existing in harmony with the rise and ebb of the tide as it flows through their homes. As might be expected, sea kin have a deep, almost mystical understanding of the ocean, and they do whatever they can to protect it from harm.

Personality: Sea kin are relatively shy beings who prefer their own kind. However, they live close to (or within) human, elf, and other societies and have learned to integrate themselves as much as they can. Some act as mediators between humans and various aquatic species.

The social shyness of the race is countered by its intense curiosity. New people and experiences intrigue sea kin. Quiet and observant, sea kin prefer to watch events from afar before coming closer to investigate. The same applies to their relationships with others, and it may take considerable time for another being to gain the trust of a sea kin.

On the whole, sea kin are positive and upbeat, and they live life with gusto. They are relatively unsophisticated and often confused by the social complexities of the landbound races. Sea kin delight in natural beauty but are also drawn to the creations of other races, particularly treasuring items that are both practical and aesthetically appealing. For this reason, sea kin are not interested in the acquisition of gold or riches for the

Illus. by E. Cox

A young sea kin tries to get a good deal for his salvaged treasures

Illus. by R. Sardinha

A sea kin community is notable for its location and its architecture

sake of wealth, but they yearn to possess items that they find beautiful.

Physical Description: To a casual observer, a sea kin looks like a regular human. On closer examination, however, the differences between the races become more apparent. The skin of sea kin is slightly shiny and slippery; it exudes a protective layer of oil that keeps them warm as well as helping them move through water. The hands and feet of sea kin are longer than those of a human and have tough webbing between their fingers and toes. Sea kin eyes are pitch black and have a secondary transparent eyelid that allows them to see unhindered underwater. Their hair is either pitch black or a metallic hue—shining silver, glimmering gold, or tawny copper. The most disturbing aspect of sea kin is their mouths, which can open wider than a human's and are filled with small, needle-sharp fangs suited for tearing apart food rather than chewing it.

Sea kin wear clothing made from natural elements, particularly seaweed, although they love clothes made by humans and other land-dwelling races. Because they spend a large amount of time on land, sea kin carry weapons and equipment similar to that used by land-dwelling humanoids.

Relations: Sea kin get along with most aquatic races, and they maintain alliances with merfolk and locathah communities. They distrust tritons, who view other races with a slight xenophobic attitude anyway. Sahuagin prey on lone sea kin who stray too far from the safety of their shoals, and as a result the two races have been bitter enemies for as long as either race can remember.

Sea kin enjoy the company of humans; some communities of mixed sea kin and humans have lived in harmony for generations. However, in greedy, suspicious, or just plain evil human societies, sea kin are viewed as competitors for resources and as impediments to waterborne travel. Sea kin prefer leaving for safer waters when conflict seems likely, but the most tenacious of them might stay to fight what they consider to be intolerance or unrestrained cruelty.

Sea kin surround themselves with creatures of the sea such as packs of seals, sea lions, walruses, and similar creatures, just as humans do with canines and other domesticated animals that are kept as pets and companions rather than livestock. As might be expected, sea kin take a dim view of humans who hunt these creatures, although they can be made to understand the necessity of slaying the animals if no other food is available.

Alignment: Sea kin are shy but friendly, and they wish to get along with their neighbors. They tend toward neutral good, with a strong sense of community and willingness to help others. They see their few laws as a way to help bring

order to the tumultuous ocean. Sea kin who live among humans adopt a more lawful attitude, while those who live along the untamed shore are much more chaotic and free-spirited.

Sea Kin Lands: Sea kin build impressive communities among rocky crags and cliffs. Their dwellings are designed to be partially underwater at high tide, allowing the waves to lap across the floor. In some areas, coastal humans and sea kin have built fully integrated communities friendly to both species.

Because of the relative scarcity of prime locations in which to construct their coral homes, sea kin sometimes inhabit the same territories as aquatic races. In the case of merfolk and sea elves, this incursion rarely causes problems, although squabbles can occur when food runs low.

Religion: Sea kin venerate nature, especially as it relates to the ocean. Those who worship a particular deity are drawn to Obad-Hai, although sea kin have been known to worship any of the same deities as the local humans. Those who feel closer to the sea worship Eadro, a sea deity also venerated by locathah and merfolk, or Deep Sashelas, an elf undersea god of knowledge and beauty.

Language: Sea kin speak Common, heavily peppered with Elven phrases (spoken with a sea elf dialect) and the occasional word of Aquan. Because sea kin spend so much time in the water, they write primarily on durable surfaces such as shell or stone with a florid, liquid script that is very pleasing to the eye. Sea kin tales are filled with evocative allegories that relate to their ocean home, and their stories tend to be long epics with cyclical themes. Sea kin who are more isolated become fluent in Aquan, the language of aquatic creatures.

Names: Sea kin have strict guidelines about how names are granted to newborns. A male child must take the name of his great-great-grandfather, while a female must follow the same tradition on the maternal side. New names are imports, added when sea folk encounter an individual who greatly impresses them and who has aided the sea kin in some grand fashion. For this reason, linguists note more than a few elf and halfling names among sea kin communities. Orc, dwarf, and gnome names are almost entirely absent, indicating that either sea kin hold these beings in poor regard or they simply haven't had enough contact with those races to warrant the inclusion of names from their languages.

Male Names: Darrius, Eemel, Marriton, Oskil, Phen, Rokar.

Female Names: Ammera, Evaa, Lilellia, Sorras, Talisera, Veras.

Adventurers: Sea kin generally prefer to stick close to the safety of their coral homes, occasionally trading with nearby land-dwelling people. That said, sea kin also have a strong sense of curiosity, and some individuals become adventurers out of sheer inquisitiveness. Other sea kin turn to adventuring after a particularly violent encounter with a dangerous race, becoming obsessed with hunting down those enemies.

Because of their understanding of the natural ebb and flow of the sea and the seasons, sea kin are drawn to the path of the druid, and many display an affinity for nature magic, particularly that associated with water, wind, and sea. Sea kin warriors are tough, persistent fighters who have few qualms about tackling their enemies head on.

SEA KIN RACIAL TRAITS

- Humanoid (human): Sea kin are humanoid creatures with the human subtype.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, sea kin have no bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Sea kin base land speed is 30 feet. Their base swim speed is 30 feet.
- Low-Light Vision: Sea kin can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- 4 extra skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each additional level: Sea kin (like their human ancestors) are versatile and capable. (The 4 skill points at 1st level are added on as a bonus, not multiplied in.)
- +2 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks: Sea kin naturally secrete a slippery oil to facilitate swimming. This secretion also makes it easy for them to slip out of restraints.
- Hold Breath (Ex): A sea kin can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to 8 × his Constitution score before he risks drowning.
- Weapon Familiarity: Sea kin treat tridents and nets as simple weapons.
- Water Dependency: A sea kin must immerse his entire body in water at least once a week or suffer ill effects. After a week has passed, a sea kin must make a Constitution check every day thereafter (DC 10 + 1 per additional day) or take 1 point of Constitution damage. Once a sea kin immerses his body in water, he immediately regains 1d4 points of Constitution per hour that he remains in water.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Aquan, Elven, and Sahuagin.
- Favored Class: Druid. A multiclass sea kin's druid class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.

SHARAKIM

Humans assume that all orcs are the same—ugly, brutish, violent, and determined to kill anyone who stands in their path. These suppositions rarely prove false. But even orcs display variation within the species, and one group in particular stands apart from all others.

The sharakim (the name means "the tainted" or "those with taint" in an old human dialect) were once human. At

least, their forebears were. Legends claim that, long ago, all humans resided in the village of Desh. They lived peacefully until a hunter named Sharak killed a sacred stag, and all those who ate of the stag's flesh became ill. Many died, but others were transformed, twisted into hideous caricatures of humanity by the evil they had committed. The humans who escaped the curse scattered, leaving Desh to be lost forever. Those creatures who had once been human gathered together and fled as well, making their own way in the world but forever after hated by humans because they stood as a reminder of that sin. These became the sharakim.

Sharakim live in small villages and towns. They are comfortable in hills and mountains, especially places that feature long shadows and high cliffs on every side. They are eager for outside contact, and thus settle close to other races. They make frequent forays to nearby towns and encourage their neighbors to visit them, whereupon they take the part of lavish hosts. Sharakim spend their waking hours fighting the impression people assume based on their appearance; only in the privacy of their own homes do they relax and gather their thoughts.

Sharakim, due to their human roots, are a special breed indeed

Illus. by E. Polak

Personality: Sharakim learn from early childhood that they were created from sin, and that others believe their existence is a curse upon the world. This knowledge makes them sullen when they are alone, and eager to please when they are with other races. Humans compare them to puppies, which hate to be alone and accept any treatment because it means attention. Sharakim despise other orcs, seeing them as examples of what they could have become, and they make every effort to distinguish themselves from those monsters. They bathe frequently and are fastidious about their clothing and manners. They learn to speak Common and strive to pronounce the words without an accent, which is difficult because of their tusks. Sharakim villages are models of tidiness and order, each house carefully placed in relation to its neighbors, and each one kept spotlessly clean. Sharakim strive to better themselves individually, constantly improving their knowledge and skills to make themselves worthy of social interaction.

Physical Description: Sharakim stand between 5 feet and 6 feet tall and weigh 140 to 275 pounds. Their skin ranges from light gray to coal black; their hair is thick but not coarse, and such a deep black it seems almost blue, though some sharakim sport silver or white streaks. They usually have either jet-black or slate-gray eyes, and more rarely eyes of dark blue or dark green. Small, curved horns protrude from both temples, and their lower canines are sharp tusks that jut up past their upper lips. Sharakim noses are usually short and snubbed, with wide nostrils.

Sharakim dress as well as their circumstances allow, to distinguish themselves from orcs. They prefer finely made shirts and pants, with soft leather boots and gloves. Many wear hats with broad brims, pulled low to cover their horns, while others prefer cloaks with deep hoods. Sharakim keep their thick fingernails trimmed, and their tusks and horns polished. They decorate their horns and tusks, carving them like ivory, capping them with precious metals, or even imbedding gems in them. Their hair is braided or pulled

back and held by a fine metal clip. Sharakim hate to expose their feet and hands, because both are oversized and feature thick, talonlike nails.

Relations: Sharakim go out of their way to ingratiate themselves with other races. They greet anyone they meet openly and cheerfully, often in the stranger's native language. Gnomes have the easiest time adjusting to sharakim, being able to look past their appearance and admire their drive and education, and the two races often live near one another, visiting to trade information and goods. Halflings admire the determination of sharakim but still feel uncomfortable around them, and become shy in their presence. Elves and dwarves do not trust the sharakim, proclaiming that an orc in fancy clothes is still an orc. They cannot deny the race's intelligence and refinement, but they still suspect a sinister motive behind the civilized behavior. Humans find themselves torn in their reactions—the sharakim look like orcs, but they act completely human. Human merchants happily do business with sharakim, but priests suspect darker intentions behind their eagerness, and fighters prefer not to trust them as comrades in battle.

Alignment: Sharakim love rules, because they like to show that they can understand and obey such strictures. They strive to be generous and helpful, making lawful good their most common alignment. Some sharakim lean toward neutrality, and a few are actively chaotic, preferring an individual approach to a mandated path.

Sharakim Lands: Sharakim live in villages nestled among high hills or low mountains. They prefer the protection of cliffs around them, but they also like to be close to other races, so their homes are usually no more than a few days' travel from a human or gnome village. Sharakim do not like open water, preferring to avoid settlements located next to rivers or lakes.

Sharakim can be found in large human cities, where they delight in the number of people present and in the chance to mingle with everyone openly. They purchase homes and redecorate them, creating elaborate carvings on door frames and columns and hanging intricate tapestries on the walls. Sharakim are known as excellent hosts no matter where they live, because their homes are always luxurious and well maintained, and because they go out of their way to make guests comfortable.

Religion: The sharakim have no deity of their own. They abhor Gruumsh, the god of the orcs, and most do not feel themselves worthy to pray to any human god. Those who dare approach a human deity pray to Heironeous, asking him to look past their twisted exteriors and see the honor and lawfulness within.

Language: All sharakim speak Common, and most speak at least one other language, usually Dwarven, Elven, or Gnome. Though a few sharakim learn Orc—the better to understand their enemies—they will not speak Orc under any circumstances, and nothing written in that language is allowed in their homes.

Sharakim love to read. They collect books in a variety of languages, and many who live in cities become booksellers.

Names: Sharakim prefer to take either human names or names that fit with the society around them. They love long names, since short names seem brutish—sharakim never use an abbreviation of anyone's name, and they insist that friends and business partners use their full names as well. A sharakim's last name is his clan name, and his given name is of human derivation. A sharakim is named at birth, but when he reaches adulthood his elders select a new name for him, one that fits his personality and talents. Sharakim keep their birth name as a middle name. Sometimes a sharakim adds a third name once he is older and settled in a particular business; then his adult name becomes his first middle name, and the birth name remains as a second middle name.

Male Names: Alastair, Benjamin, Carrington, Daniel, Malcolm, Nathaniel, Reginald, Winchester.

Female Names: Aurora, Bedelia, Christina, Clarissa, Elizabeth, Margaret, Winnifred.

Clan Names: Andromar, Barechian, Helefern, Lochlaman, Malendik, Norferat, Sarekar.

Adventurers: Every sharakim feels he has to prove his worth, both to himself and to others. He strives to show that he is as smart, as noble, as honorable, and as skilled as any human or dwarf or elf, because he believes this effort will win their respect. Most sharakim, upon reaching adulthood, leave their villages to go adventuring. This allows them to encounter strangers, make new friends, and hone their skills. Earning riches is less important than winning renown, and a sharakim who is immortalized in song is the pride of his clan.

SHARAKIM RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Strength, –2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Charisma: Sharakim are naturally strong but their size makes them clumsy. Their monstrous appearance works against them in social settings, but their culture forces them to be well educated.
- Humanoid (human): Sharakim are humanoid creatures with the human subtype.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, sharakim have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Sharakim base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Sharakim can see in the dark out to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and sharakim can function just fine with no light at all.
- +1 natural armor bonus: Sharakim skin is tough and difficult to pierce.
- Shadow Affinity (Ex): Sharakim are born to darkness, and despite their claims they operate best in night and shadow. In areas of darkness or shadowy illumination, a

sharakim gains a +2 racial bonus on Hide, Move Silently, Search, and Spot checks.

- Light Sensitivity (Ex): Sharakim take a –1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.
- +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against orcs (including half-orcs): Sharakim despise orcs, and learn special combat techniques that enable them to fight them more effectively.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, and Orc.
- Favored Class: Wizard. A multiclass sharakim's wizard class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- Level adjustment +1.

SKULK

Once members of an underprivileged caste of an ancient empire, the humans who would become skulks withdrew from the world through a magical ceremony that solidified their "untouchable" status. The ritual granted them natural camouflage, allowing skulks to blend in perfectly with their surroundings.

Skulks gather in small bands within or near human communities. When night falls, they engage in raids that result in bloodshed as the skulks' innate hatred for humans manifests itself in murderous rage. They use ambush, deception, and superior numbers to overwhelm their victims.

Personality: Skulks are angry, violent creatures who harbor jealous hatred for all beings more fortunate than them (which includes just about everyone). They have a powerful self-preservation instinct, often mistaken for cowardice, that keeps them to the shadows. They have little regard even for their own people, and skulk mothers have been known to abandon their own young if it meant protecting their own skin.

If a skulk is happy about something, it's probably not a good thing

Physical Description: Skulks stand between 5 feet and 6 feet tall and weigh 120 to 180 pounds. They are completely hairless and wear little or no clothing. It is difficult to determine, at first glance, whether a skulk is male or female. Their skin is usually dull gray, but an individual can change its color on a whim, from a subdued brown to a lurid red or yellow. Skulks are capable of assuming any "natural" human flesh tone to better blend in. They have pupilless blue eyes, regardless of their skin coloration.

Relations: Skulks typically hate all humanoid races, but display particular viciousness toward their human forebears. Even those skulks who aren't evil don't usually trust other races, remaining on the outskirts of civilization rather than trying to integrate themselves.

Alignment: Naturally violent and cruel, skulks tend toward chaos and evil, though a few manage to avoid these tendencies. Good skulks are outcasts even among their own people, and lawful skulks are extraordinarily rare (but can become leaders among their race).

Skulk Lands: Skulks have no lands of their own, instead living near or within human towns and cities. They are parasitic in nature, living off what they can scrounge or steal. Particularly bold skulks even live among humans for short periods of time, using disguise and subterfuge to survive.

Religion: Skulks typically worship deities devoted to evil, deception, treachery, and murder. Nerull and Vecna find numerous worshipers among the skulks. Nonevil skulks venerate deities such as Boccob or Olidammara. Their most revered deity is the god Syrul, a neutral evil god of lies, deceit, treachery, and false promises. Her domains are Evil, Knowledge, and Trickery, and her favored weapon is the dagger.

Language: Skulks speak a bastardized version of Common, rife with words and concepts from long-dead human cultures. They can understand speakers of Common, and vice versa.

Names: Skulk names are typically simple, one- or two-syllable monikers.

Table 4–2: The Skulk **Hit Die: d8**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	HD	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	CR	Special
1st	+0	1d8	+0	+2	+0	(2 + Int mod) × 4	1/2	+2 Dex, –2 Wis, –4 Cha, +4 Hide, +5 Move Silently, feat
2nd	+1	2d8	+0	+3	+0	2 + Int mod	1	Trackless path, +2 Hide, +5 Move Silently
3rd	+1	2d8	+0	+3	+0	—	2	+2 Dex, innate nondetection, peerless camouflage, +2 Hide, +5 Move Silently

Illus. by E. Polak

They avoid harsh, sibilant sounds (such as f, s, or x), the better to signal their allies quietly. Skulks do not recognize any ties to family or clan, and thus rarely use anything more than a single name.

Male Names: Hadan, Krem, Lar, Lorrid, Mullev.

Female Names: Adal, Ev, Ilen, Olleg, Udge.

Adventurers: Skulks who are brave enough to leave their people are rare, but can prove effective adventurers. Skulk adventurers, however, are outcasts from their coterie, forced into a life of danger by necessity rather than choice. In any case, skulk adventurers are most often rogues, fighters, or barbarians. Skulk bards who overcome the race's naturally insensitive personality can become exceptional spies.

SKULK RACIAL TRAITS

- +4 Dexterity, –2 Wisdom, –4 Charisma: Skulks are agile and graceful, but have weak wills and subdued personalities.
- Humanoid (human): Skulks are humanoid creatures with the human subtype.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, skulks have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Skulk base land speed is 30 feet.
- Racial Hit Dice: A skulk begins with two levels of humanoid, which provide 2d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +1, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +0, Ref +3, and Will +0.
- Racial Skills: A skulk's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to 5 × (2 + Int modifier). Its class skills are Hide (Dex) and Move Silently (Dex).
- Racial Feats: A skulk's humanoid levels give it one feat.
- +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks and a +15 racial bonus on Hide checks: Skulks excel at keeping to the shadows. These bonuses apply only when a skulk is wearing light armor or no armor.
- Innate Nondetection (Su): Skulks are difficult to detect by divination spells such as *clairaudience/clairvoyance, locate creature, detect* spells, and items such as a *crystal ball*. If a divination is attempted upon a skulk, the caster of the divination must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check.
- Peerless Camouflage (Ex): Skulks can move at full speed (and can even run) while hiding, taking no penalties on Hide checks due to movement.
- Trackless Path (Ex): The DC of any Survival check to follow the trail of a skulk is increased by 10.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, and Orc.
- Favored Class: Rogue. A multiclass skulk's rogue class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- Level adjustment +1.

SKULK MONSTER CLASS

Humanoid (Human)

If you want to play a skulk at 1st level, you can use the skulk monster class. To use the monster class, generate your character with the racial traits given below (rather than the skulk racial traits presented above), and then take levels in the skulk class as you would levels of other classes. For more information on monster classes, see the Monster Classes section at the beginning of this chapter.

Skulks are masters of stealth, relying on superior camouflage and other talents to sneak up on victims. They make excellent burglars, spies, and, of course, assassins. They lack versatility, but make up for that with unparalleled excellence at defying detection.

Skulks begin play with none of their extraordinary or supernatural abilities, but are quite capable at sneaking already. They soon master the race's innate talents of stealth and camouflage, reaching full strength by 3rd level.

RACIAL TRAITS AT 1ST LEVEL

- Starting Ability Score Adjustments: +2 Dexterity, –2 Wisdom, –4 Charisma. Skulks are agile and graceful, but have weak wills and subdued personalities.
- Speed: Skulk base land speed is 30 feet.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, skulks have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks and +5 racial bonus on Hide checks: Skulks excel at keeping to the shadows. These bonuses apply only when a skulk is wearing light armor or no armor.
- Automatic Language: Common.

CLASS SKILLS

The skulk's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Hide (Dex) and Move Silently (Dex).

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the skulk monster class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Skulks are proficient with all simple weapons, but have no proficiency with any armor or shield.

Racial Skill Bonus: A skulk's racial bonus on Move Silently checks improves to +6 at 2nd level and to +8 at 3rd level. A skulk's racial bonus on Hide checks improves to +10 at 2nd level and to +15 at 3rd level.

Trackless Path (Ex): Beginning when a skulk reaches 2nd level, the DC of any Survival check to follow his trail is increased by 10.

Innate Nondetection (Su): A skulk of 3rd level or higher is difficult to detect by divination spells such as *clairaudience/clairvoyance, locate creature, detect* spells, and items such as a *crystal ball*. If a divination is attempted upon the skulk,

the caster of the divination must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check.

Peerless Camouflage (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, a skulk can move at full speed (and can even run) while hiding, taking no penalties on Hide checks due to movement.

TIEFLING

A tiefling is the descendant of a union between an infernal creature and a human. Shunned and maligned by the world at large, tieflings maintain a low profile and make their livings as spies, thieves, assassins, or smugglers. Few find the "legitimate" world very appealing, and instead they blossom in the seedier side of society.

Tieflings are diametrically opposed to aasimars (see page 92), and the two have found themselves innately at odds for untold generations. Some tieflings serve as mere soldiers for the dark powers, while others devise their own selfish goals, seeing cooperation with infernal beings for mutual benefit.

Personality: Tieflings have a well-deserved reputation for being conniving, sneaky, and underhanded. They are universally self-serving and only look out for number one. Some take their evil nature to an extreme and become champions of woe, despair, and violence. Most tieflings, however, prefer to skulk behind the scenes, using deceit and surprise as their primary weapons.

A tiefling wizard can appear alluring and imposing at the same time

In rare instances, a tiefling fights her natural impulses toward evil and strives to do good (or at least not to cause harm). These repentant beings face persecution and mistrust from others of their kind.

Physical Description: Tieflings appear human at a glance, although they all possess at least one unnatural feature that reveals their infernal heritage. At the least, tieflings have a disturbing demeanor or carry a whiff of brimstone about them, but most also possess small horns, red eyes, or needle-sharp teeth. In extreme cases, a tiefling may have a barbed tail or cloven feet. No two tieflings have the same appearance.

Relations: Tieflings are universally reviled by members of almost every other race, good or evil. Most are persecuted and cast out from society when their true nature is revealed. In such a case, the outcast takes to the wild, dons a disguise, or, more commonly, works herself into a position of power and authority so that she can make her own rules. Tieflings find easier acceptance among evil races such as orcs, goblins, and gnolls, but only if they prove their own strength and power. As a result of this relentless rejection, tieflings view other races as nothing more than chattel or pawns in their convoluted schemes.

Alignment: Due to their infernal blood, almost all tieflings are evil. Whether rapacious and chaotic, self-serving and subtle, or adhering to a twisted and rigid sense of honor and lawfulness, few tieflings escape the taint in their blood that bids them toward evil.

Tiefling Lands: Like other planetouched creatures, tieflings are too few in number to claim their own lands. However, they can be found almost anywhere, particularly in evil and lawless lands where their lack of scruples is an asset. Tieflings typically crave power, preferring to pull strings from the shadows rather than rise to overt positions of authority.

Religion: Most tieflings are too consumed by their own agenda to pay attention to religion. Those who choose to worship are devoutly dedicated to dark and infernal powers such as Hextor, Nerull, and Wee Jas.

Language: Like aasimars, tieflings are largely raised among humans and speak Common as their primary

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language. The Infernal tongue comes naturally to them; some parents of tieflings have been horrified when their child's first words sounded as if they had emerged from the Abyss. Tieflings learn several different languages during their wandering travels.

Names: Most tieflings have human names, although one may acquire an infernal-sounding name, especially if raised by parents who accepted the taint of their offspring. Some tieflings take on multiple names and switch aliases numerous times during their lives to help them from being hunted down.

Male Names: Gooruth, Kharkuk, Mexil, Takkak, Vexiimitron, Zarek.

Female Names: Cherrakia, Keberii, Seshra, Shalim, Nessis, Ventera.

Adventurers: Subtle and devious, tieflings are natural rogues, striking from the shadows and manipulating the weak minded. Tieflings devoted to a dark deity become clerics. Martial tieflings become fighters or rangers, choosing humans and other good races as their favored enemies. Their naturally poor Charisma hinders most tieflings in learning the bardic arts, though a few are attracted to the idea of entertaining and thereby manipulating others.

TIEFLING RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Charisma: Tieflings' infernal heritage grants them quickness and cleverness, but others find their sinister aura unsettling.
- Outsider (native): Tieflings are outsiders who are native to the Material Plane. Unlike true outsiders, native outsiders need to eat and sleep.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, tieflings have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Tiefling base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Tieflings can see in the dark out to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and tieflings can function just fine with no light at all.
- +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Hide checks: Tieflings are deceptive and stealthy.
- Darkness (Sp): A tiefling can use *darkness* once per day as a 1st-level caster or a caster of her class level, whichever is higher.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Infernal. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, and Orc.
- Favored Class: Rogue. A multiclass tiefling's rogue class does not count when determining whether she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.
- Level adjustment +1.

UNDERFOLK

The underfolk are descendants of bands of humans who chose—or were forced—to live in the caves and twisting passageways of the underground world. Over generations, these humans adapted to this strange world, filled with natural wonders and dangerous creatures. Some underfolk societies have not ventured to the surface in generations, and others have forgotten their true origins altogether. However, those who live close to the caves that give entry to the underground realms make occasional forays to the surface and even engage in limited trade with surface-dwelling humans.

Underfolk are a simple, clannish people dedicated to their homes and the safety of their race. Because of the multitude of evil and predatory races and creatures in the caves and tunnels they call home, underfolk have become quick, stealthy, and survival-oriented. Although rather primitive and rustic when it comes to technology, underfolk make up for this lack with a superior knowledge of how to survive beneath ground, although even they avoid the deepest depths of the subterranean realms.

Personality: Underfolk are insular and focused on their tribe's well-being. They can be mildly xenophobic and suspicious of strangers, although they become deeply loyal to those who are true to their word and prove their worth. While not as bound to their grudges as dwarves are, underfolk nevertheless take oaths very seriously and immediately sever ties with any being who lies or otherwise deceives them.

Underfolk maintain a deep spiritual connection with their home and have come to understand the subtle rhythms of its seasons. They delight in the natural beauty of underground caves, warrens, and grottos, and do their best to keep them from harm. Underfolk have a rich oral tradition and fill their speech with allegories, oaths, and hyperbolic statements. Unlike those of dwarves, who share a similar custom, underfolk stories are poetic and rather dreamlike in quality.

Singing is a favorite pastime among underfolk, and every individual knows a litany of tunes.

Physical Description: Underfolk are both short and slight, with builds similar to elves. They typically stand between 5 and 5-1/2 feet tall, weighing 100 to 150 pounds. Their eyes and ears are proportionally larger than those of humans, having evolved to enable underfolk to see in pitch blackness and make out the quietest sounds. Underfolk have thick body hair to keep them warm in the chill of their tunnels, and they wear their typically black or silvery-white tresses long.

Underfolk depend for survival on their ability to blend into the surrounding terrain. Their skin has evolved special pigmentation that can mimic the various rocky hues found in the underground, allowing them to seemingly disappear into a nearby wall.

Relations: Underfolk prefer to keep to themselves, although of necessity tribes try to build goodwill with friendlier races that live nearby. Underfolk who live close to the surface have contact with humans, halflings, and the occasional elf society, and serve as guides for those who want to plumb the depths of the underground realms. However, they are shy and suspicious when dealing with surface-dwellers. Underfolk are decidedly neutral when dealing with dwarves, because this stout race views underfolk as primitive and barbaric. Those dwarves who overlook this prejudice find a kind people who simply want to be left alone. In turn, underfolk occasionally provide aid to dwarves when needed, especially when their mutual assistance is needed to fight against their common foes—drow, orcs, and the like.

Underfolk are the target of drow, svirfneblin, and kuo-toa aggression, and they do their best to avoid contact with these races. However, as hunter-gatherers, underfolk commonly have to enter their enemies' territory to find enough food to survive. Also, due to their relative closeness to the surface, underfolk come into hostile contact with orcs, who have need of the same caves that the underfolk inhabit.

Alignment: Concerned primarily with their own survival and the well-being of the tribe, underfolk remain neutral, with a slight tendency toward good or lawfulness. Chaotic underfolk are not common, but are typically relegated to the outskirts of society rather than driven out entirely, since the tribe's welfare depends on every individual's efforts. On occasion, underfolk tribes that live in close contact with drow or deep gnomes have fallen to evil, after centuries of warfare, depression, and cynicism have worn down their sense of justice and hope.

Underfolk Lands: Underfolk live in the "shallowest" regions of the underground, within a mile or so of the surface. Tribes live in the same territory as orcs, goblins, drow, and other subterranean dwellers, but do their best to remain unnoticed. Most underfolk tribes number between fifty and one hundred individuals, although larger tribes exist, including at least a few "cities" of nearly a thousand people. Underfolk tribes with a militaristic bent make forays into orc and goblin warrens, in an effort to drive those creatures out of areas they want to claim for themselves.

Religion: Underfolk are deeply spiritual and connected closely with the natural world. Some tribes brought the memories of the "surface gods" with them, especially Obad-Hai. Tribes in close contact with dwarves or gnomes show a healthy respect for Moradin or Garl Glittergold.

Language: Underfolk live close enough to the surface that they still speak a heavily accented version of Common, with each tribe infusing its speech with phrases from Dwarven, Gnome, or other languages from nearby races. Underfolk learn to speak these languages as well, and they find Undercommon especially useful. Few underfolk bother to learn how to read, and those who do use Dwarven script rather than Common.

Names: Underfolk names were originally human, but have evolved over generations of isolation from humans and the influx of words from subterranean races. The few linguists who have studied the simple and guttural underfolk names see connections with surface cultures that died out long ago.

An underfolk barbarian emerges from darkness into light

Illus. by J. Miracola

Male Names: Baroo, Gungir, Hoornoo, Mettar, Narar, Turungo.

Female Names: Ahmpa, Bethera, Halla, Noola, Tooloo, Vema.

Adventurers: Hardy, self-reliant, and fierce in battle, underfolk commonly become barbarians or rangers. Because of their tie to the natural world, underfolk spellcasters are druids or clerics, although wizards and sorcerers exist among tribes in close contact with gnomes. Their rich oral history and love of song make bards a common sight among the underfolk, acting as liaisons and diplomats between far-flung tribes. Rogues are uncommon, but they excel in the darkness, slinking among the stones with quiet grace. Paladin and monk underfolk are exceedingly rare.

UNDERFOLK RACIAL TRAITS

- Humanoid (human): Underfolk are humanoid creatures with the human subtype.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, underfolk have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Underfolk base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Underfolk can see in the dark out to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and underfolk can function just fine with no light at all.
- 4 extra skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each additional level, since underfolk (like their human ancestors) are versatile and capable. (The 4 skill points at 1st level are added on as a bonus, not multiplied in.)
- +2 racial bonus on Listen checks: Living as underground hunters for generations has given underfolk keen hearing.
- Weapon Familiarity: Underfolk treat light and heavy picks as simple weapons rather than martial weapons.
- Camouflage (Ex): Underfolk can change their skin coloration at will to mimic the surrounding terrain, giving them a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks. In rocky terrain, this bonus increases to +10. This ability works even if an underfolk is viewed with darkvision, although *true seeing* negates the bonus.
- Light Sensitivity (Ex): Underfolk are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Drow, Dwarven, Gnome, Goblin, and Orc. Underfolk mingle with subterranean races and learn their languages to facilitate interaction.
- Favored Class: Any. When determining whether a multiclass underfolk takes an experience point penalty, his highest-level class does not count.

AGE, HEIGHT, AND WEIGHT

The following tables can help you determine your character's starting height, weight, and age. Remember that you are also free to simply choose these descriptive elements of your character, but you can roll on the tables below if you wish. An explanation for using these tables can be found on page 109 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Table 4–3: Random Starting Ages

Race	Adulthood	Simple[1]	Moderate[2]	Complex[3]
Aasimar	15 years	+1d6	+1d8	+2d8
Doppelganger	15 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Half-ogre	14 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Mongrelfolk	15 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Sea kin	17 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Sharakim	16 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Skulk	15 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Tiefling	15 years	+1d6	+1d8	+2d8
Underfolk	15 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6

1 Simple classes are barbarian, rogue, and sorcerer.
2 Moderate classes are bard, fighter, paladin, and ranger.
3 Complex classes are cleric, druid, monk, and wizard.

Table 4–4: Aging Effects

Race	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Aasimar	45 years	68 years	90 years	+3d20
Doppelganger	35 years	53 years	70 years	+2d20
Half-ogre	30 years	45 years	60 years	+2d12
Mongrelfolk	35 years	53 years	70 years	+2d20
Sea kin	40 years	63 years	85 years	+3d20
Sharakim	30 years	45 years	60 years	+2d10
Skulk	35 years	53 years	70 years	+2d20
Tiefling	45 years	68 years	90 years	+3d20
Underfolk	35 years	53 years	70 years	+2d20

Table 4–5: Random Starting Height and Weight

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Aasimar, m.	4′ 10″	+2d10	120 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Aasimar, f.	4′ 5″	+2d10	85 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Doppelganger*	4′ 8″	+2d10	100 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Half-ogre, m.	6′ 10″	+2d12	250 lb.	× (3d8) lb.
Half-ogre, f.	6′ 5″	+2d12	210 lb.	× (3d8) lb.
Mongrelfolk, m.	4′ 4″	+2d6	100 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Mongrelfolk, f.	4′ 3″	+2d6	85 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Sea Kin, m.	4′ 10″	+2d10	120 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Sea Kin, f.	4′ 5″	+2d10	85 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Sharakim, m.	4′ 10″	+2d10	150 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Sharakim, f.	4′ 5″	+2d10	110 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Skulk, m.	4′ 10″	+2d10	105 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Skulk, f.	4′ 5″	+2d10	70 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Tiefling, m.	4′ 10″	+2d10	120 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Tiefling, f.	4′ 5″	+2d10	85 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Underfolk, m.	4′ 5″	+2d6	85 lb.	× (1d6) lb.
Underfolk, f.	4′ 4″	+2d6	80 lb.	× (1d6) lb.

* In their natural form, doppelgangers can take on any height and weight within the standards for Small and Medium creatures.

Illus. by C. Lukacs

The seven prestige classes provided in this chapter are designed for the races described in Chapters 1–3 of this book (humans, half-elves, half-orcs, and illumians), as well as the various humanoid races discussed in Chapter 4. Most of these prestige classes work best in human-dominated cultures and urban settings.

Table 5–1, below, provides a brief characterization of each prestige class.

Table 5–1: New Prestige Classes

Class	Description
Chameleon	Human jack of all trades, but not all at once
Loredelver	Illumian seeker of lost knowledge
Menacing brute	Half-orc warrior of the alleyways
Outcast champion	Half-human leader of the downtrodden
Scar enforcer	Embittered half-elf outcast
Shadow sentinel	Illumian protector of the people
Urban soul	Human city-bonded defender

CHAMELEON

"Someone called for a cleric? Oh, you needed a fighter instead? I'm sorry—I meant to say that the cleric is on his way. I'm the fighter."

—Jonata Quimbel

Sometimes it's good to be a fighter, able to wield any weapon. Other times, you'd be better off as a rogue, with stealth and the ability to backstab foes. And sometimes, nothing but spells will do the trick. When these situations collide and you need one answer, you need a chameleon.

Chameleons are dilettantes in every class and masters of none. They know enough of each class's skills and abilities to mimic that class effectively. You can masquerade as a fighter, a rogue, or even a wizard or a cleric. Part of it is power, of course—you learn to harness your own natural energy, shaping it into whichever class you require that day. But the rest is pure attitude—you are a talented performer, and when you walk into a room with a holy symbol around your neck, people believe you have true faith.

BECOMING A CHAMELEON

A member of any class can become a chameleon—because, after all, a chameleon can become anyone. The easiest path is through the rogue class, since the rogue's large number of skill points makes meeting the skill requirements easy. Bards also make excellent chameleons, since they are talented performers who already know some magic.

Chameleons who were spellcasters have a clear advantage, because their spell lists are not as limited. Chameleon clerics are rare, but extremely valuable, because they can heal and turn undead with more potency than a chameleon merely posing as a priest. The class is also an interesting choice for monks—their discipline makes it easier to adapt the body to each new role, even if their poor social skills hamper their performances.

Entry Requirements

Race: Human or Doppelganger.
Skills: Bluff 8 ranks, Disguise 8 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks, Spellcraft 4 ranks.
Feat: Able Learner†.
† New feat; see page 150.

CLASS FEATURES

The chameleon's class features allow you to adopt a variety of roles, from armored warrior to spellcaster to sneaky rogue.

You can't use any abilities gained from your aptitude focus, ability boon, or mimic class feature abilities to qualify for a feat, prestige class, or other option. You can use your bonus feat to qualify for such options, but if you change the feat, you suffer the normal drawbacks for no longer meeting a prerequisite or requirement.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with all simple weapons and with all forms of armor, including shields (but not tower shields).

Aptitude Focus (Ex): Once per day, you can select one of five areas upon which to focus your ever-shifting talents. After meditating for 1 hour, you gain the chosen abilities for 24 hours or until you change your aptitude focus. An aptitude focus ability is usable once per day at 1st level, twice per day at 5th level, and three times per day at 10th level.

At 5th level, you can change your aptitude focus one time per day, and at 10th level you can change your aptitude focus two times per day. If you change to the arcane focus or divine focus ability, you must still obey the normal rules for preparing spells (including any rest required).

Arcane Focus: You gain the ability to prepare and cast arcane spells, which may be chosen from the spell list of any arcane spellcasting class. You prepare and cast these spells just as a wizard does, including the use of a spellbook (chameleons often use stolen or borrowed spellbooks; see page 178 of the *Player's Handbook* for details). Your spells per day are noted on Table 5–2: The Chameleon. You gain bonus spells for a high Intelligence score, just as a wizard does. When Table 5–2 indicates that you get 0 spells per day of a given spell level, you gain only the bonus spells you would be entitled to based on your Intelligence score for that spell level. Your caster level is equal to twice your class level.

You also gain a +2 competence bonus on Knowledge (arcana) checks and Spellcraft checks and a +2 bonus on Will saves; at 5th level, the bonuses improve to +4.

Combat Focus: You gain proficiency with all martial weapons. You also gain a +2 competence bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls and a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves. At 5th level, the bonuses improve to +4.

Divine Focus: You gain the ability to prepare and cast divine spells, which may be chosen from the spell list of any divine spellcasting class. You prepare and cast these spells just as a cleric does, except that you cannot spontaneously cast spells. You can only prepare new divine spells at sunrise. Your spells per day are noted on Table 5–2: The Chameleon. You gain bonus spells for a high Wisdom score, just as a cleric does. When Table 5–2 indicates that you get 0 spells per day of a given spell level, you gain only the bonus spells you would be entitled to based on your Wisdom score for that spell level. Your caster level is equal to twice your class level.

You also gain a +2 competence bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks and a +2 bonus on Fortitude and Will saves; at 5th level, the bonuses improve to +4.

Stealth Focus: You gain trapfinding (see page 50 of the *Player's Handbook*), uncanny dodge (see page 26 of the *Player's Handbook*), a +2 competence bonus on Disable Device, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock, and Search checks, and a +2 bonus on Reflex saves. At 5th level, the bonuses improve to +4.

Wild Focus: You gain wild empathy (see page 35 of the *Player's Handbook*; treat your druid level as equal to your class level), woodland stride (see page 36 of the *Player's Handbook*),

Table 5–2: The Chameleon **Hit Die: d8**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	—Spells per Day— 0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1st	+0	+0	+0	+0	Aptitude focus 1/day (+2)	4	2	0	—	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+0	Bonus feat	4	3	1	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+1	Mimic class feature 1/day	4	3	2	0	—	—	—
4th	+3	+1	+1	+1	Ability boon +2	4	4	3	1	—	—	—
5th	+3	+1	+1	+1	Aptitude focus 2/day (+4)	4	4	3	2	0	—	—
6th	+4	+2	+2	+2	Mimic class feature 2/day	4	4	4	3	1	—	—
7th	+5	+2	+2	+2	Ability boon +4, double aptitude	4	4	4	4	2	0	—
8th	+6	+2	+2	+2	Rapid refocus	4	4	4	4	3	1	—
9th	+6	+3	+3	+3	Mimic class feature 3/day	4	4	4	4	4	2	0
10th	+7	+3	+3	+3	Ability boon +6, aptitude focus 3/day (+4)	4	4	4	4	4	3	1

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Bluff, Concentration, Craft, Disguise, Profession, Sense Motive, Swim, and Use Magic Device.

a +2 competence bonus on Climb, Handle Animal, Jump, Knowledge (nature), and Survival checks, and a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves. At 5th level, the bonuses improve to +4.

Bonus Feat (Ex): At 2nd level, you gain a bonus feat. You must meet the prerequisites for this feat. At the start of each day, you can choose to change your bonus feat to any other feat for which you meet the prerequisites.

Mimic Class Feature: At 3rd level, you gain the ability to mimic a certain class feature possessed by other characters. Once per day, you can use any of the class features described below. At 6th level, you can use this ability twice per day (either to mimic the same class feature on two different occasions or two different class features at separate times). At 9th level, you can use this ability three times per day.

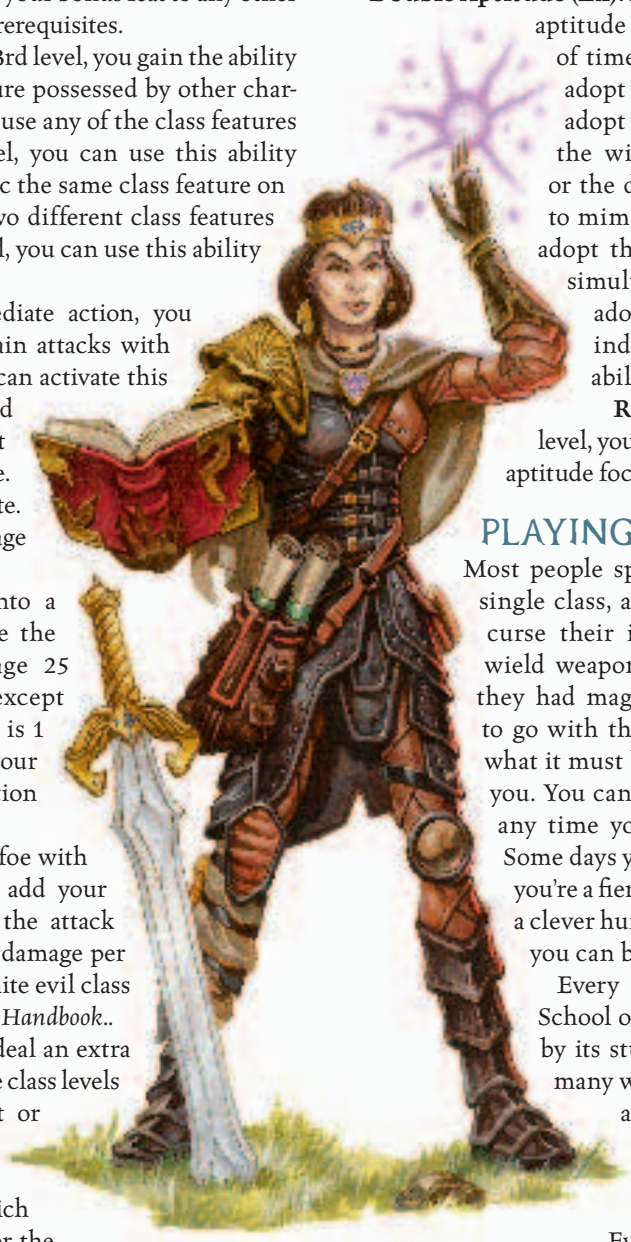
Evasion (Ex): As an immediate action, you can avoid damage from certain attacks with a successful Reflex save. You can activate this ability after you have rolled a successful Reflex save, but before you have taken damage. This ability lasts for 1 minute. See the monk class feature, page 41 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Rage (Ex): You can fly into a screaming blood frenzy. See the barbarian class feature, page 25 of the *Player's Handbook*, except that the duration of the rage is 1 round + 1 round per point of your (newly improved) Constitution modifier.

Smite (Ex): You can smite a foe with a normal melee attack. You add your Charisma bonus (if any) to the attack roll and deal 1 extra point of damage per class level. See the paladin smite evil class feature, page 44 of the *Player's Handbook*..

Sneak Attack (Ex): You can deal an extra 1d6 points of damage per three class levels when flanking an opponent or any time the target would be denied its Dexterity bonus (except on ranged attacks, which must be point-blank to deliver the extra damage). See the rogue class feature, page 50 of the *Player's Handbook*. Treat your rogue level as equal to your class level for the purpose of defeating improved uncanny dodge.

Turn/Rebuke Undead (Su): You can turn or rebuke undead creatures (your choice when activating the ability) by channeling the power of your faith through a holy symbol. See Turn or Rebuke Undead, page 159 of the *Player's Handbook*. Treat your cleric level as equal to your class level.



Posing as a fighter, Jonata Quimbel the chameleon prepares to cast a spell

Ability Boon (Ex): At 4th level, when choosing an aptitude focus, you also gain a +2 competence bonus to an ability score of your choice. This bonus lasts until you change your aptitude focus. At 7th level this bonus improves to +4, and at 10th level to +6.

Double Aptitude (Ex): At 7th level, you can adopt two aptitude focuses in the same amount of time it previously took for you to adopt one. For example, you could adopt both the combat focus and the wild focus to mimic a ranger, or the divine focus and arcane focus to mimic a mystic theurge. You can't adopt the same aptitude focus twice simultaneously. You can still only adopt as many focuses per day as indicated by your aptitude focus ability.

Rapid Refocus (Ex): At 8th level, you gain the power to change your aptitude focus in only 10 minutes.

PLAYING A CHAMELEON

Most people spend their lives defined by a single class, a single set of abilities. Mages curse their inability to wear armor and wield weapons. Fighters desperately wish they had magic. Rogues long for strength to go with their guile, and priests wonder what it must be like to be stealthy. But not you. You can become any of those classes, any time you want. You have no limits. Some days you have magic, and other days you're a fierce warrior, a talented sneak, or a clever hunter. Whatever you need to be, you can become.

Every chameleon is trained at the School of Broad Horizons, also known by its students as Mimic Mansion. In many ways this school is a monastery, a reclusive compound where teachers break students of old habits and force them to rely on new skills and abilities. Even after you leave, you are not free of the Mimic Mansion. Your superiors expect you to report in regularly on your activities. Sometimes they require you to undertake assignments for them, usually with no explanation. But you always obey. Really, you have no choice—you owe everything to the school, and you know it. Besides, you never know when someone nearby might be another chameleon, watching you and reporting on your behavior.

Illus. by J. Nelson

Combat

How you fight depends entirely on your persona for that day. If you're playing a fighter or a paladin, you charge into the fray, weapons drawn. As a barbarian, you usually race around the edges, harrying opponents with your speed. When you're a rogue, you sneak in and attack from behind. As a spellcaster, you'll probably stand back and use your spells to their best advantage, though you may wade in with your staff or mace after that. Given a choice (and time to switch), you'll choose whichever class your comrades most need—usually either a fighter or a spellcaster.

The worst combat situation for you is an ambush. You have no time to prepare a fighting persona, so you have to make do with your current role, whatever that is. Fortunately, you always have your knowledge, skills, and your ability with weapons. Arcane spellcasters don't use heavy weapons or armor, so if you're properly equipped you can target the enemy's mages and take them down quickly. And if you have spells that day, no one expects you to suddenly draw a sword and hack them down, which gives you the advantage of surprise. You wear armor under your robes for just such an occasion.

At higher levels, you can actually change your class in the middle of the day. This gives you much more flexibility, knowing that you can expend all your resources in a given fight and come back fully recharged after a brief rest. Imagine starting the day as a spellcaster, exhausting your spells, and then switching to a fighter—especially if the spells you selected have durations that extend into your second aptitude.

Advancement

Chameleons look for people with good natural abilities, open minds, and a knack for performance. Once a potential recruit is selected, they watch her for several days before offering an invitation to a retreat. Chameleons only invite those with a true desire for change, and those who have the mental strength to focus their energies to tap their potential.

At the retreat, you and the other recruits meet several chameleons who demonstrate their varied skills. Of course, meeting someone who can cast spells but also claims she is a fighter is not very convincing. But the next morning, when that same person works up a barbarian rage or sneaks up and steals your pouch, you begin to believe. Then the chameleons offer you a choice. You can decline their offer and return to your normal life—the chameleons are only passing through (local chameleons never participate in the retreat), and you won't ever see them again. Or you can embrace your destiny and travel to the School of Broad Horizons to begin your training.

Life at Mimic Mansion is not easy. The compound has no luxuries, and you are forced to endure long days, harsh conditions, and difficult assignments. To be a chameleon requires mastery of the physical, mental, and spiritual, and it forces you to look past frivolous desires and concentrate on your real goal: to break free of your old mind-set. The chameleons teach that every person has the potential to become a member of every class—everyone can cast spells, everyone can walk through the woods unnoticed, everyone can unleash a raging fury in battle or sneak up on their enemies. But society teaches that each person can only excel at one role. The chameleons shatter this notion. They force you to realize the only thing stopping you from doing everything, acquiring every talent, is your own lack of belief. Once that barrier has been overcome, they teach you to master each ability. But being a chameleon is more than discovering you can cast spells *and* fight, rather than one or the other. Using each ability requires the right mind-set, for you are not merely pretending to be a fighter or wizard. When you channel those abilities, you actually become a member of that class for the day. Your power comes from that self-confidence, and your acceptance of a destiny greater than society would allowed.

You earn full chameleon status by passing a final exam, which involves masquerading in each of your many roles. You simply need to convince someone that you are, in fact, a member of a given class. Once you have persuaded a new person for each class, you graduate from the mansion and you are given a small tattoo of a chameleon in the space between your first and second finger. This identifies you as a chameleon, and allows you to prove your identity to other chameleons you may meet.

After entering this class, you should always keep your Bluff skill at the highest rank possible. This skill is paramount to chameleons, for obvious reasons. Disguise is also useful, since sometimes you need to become a new person when you change your skill set.

Several of the key skills required in pulling off a successful impersonation of another class (such as Disable Device, Open Lock, Handle Animal, and various Knowledge skills) can't be used untrained, so a few ranks in each are vital. Spellcraft is also important—it allows you to study spellcasters and their methods, which means you can mimic them more accurately.

Resources

Mimic Mansion provides its graduates with the basics for their transformations. These include armor, weapons, thieves' tools, a holy symbol (fake), and a spellbook (written in gibberish). When sending someone out on a mission, the school can provide additional resources if necessary. It expects such items to be returned after the mission is complete.

Chameleons are expected to be self-sufficient whenever possible. They are also required to maintain the secrecy of their class, and of the school, at all costs—any chameleon who is captured and interrogated is given up for dead by the school. The best she can hope for is that another chameleon will sneak in to kill her quickly.

CHAMELEONS IN THE WORLD

Chameleons add spice and intrigue to your game. They are unpredictable, keeping other characters guessing as to their true class, abilities, and motives. But chameleons are also very useful to a party. They can cast spells, sneak, fight, and even heal (to a degree), as the occasion requires. Even so, Mimic Mansion has its own agenda, and this can cause tension within a group, or get the entire party into a sticky situation.

Organization

Every chameleon owes her allegiance to the Mimic Mansion and its senior instructors, but most chameleons do not learn the school's true purpose until after they graduate. Teaching people to access their full potential is only a means to an end. The school's real goal is to create an army of untraceable assassins, people who can become anyone and use any abilities required to get the job done.

An assassin named Salazar founded the School of Broad Horizons. Salazar was extremely effective, but he kept running up against situations that required stealth, spells, and swords. "If only I had all those abilities," he kept thinking, "there'd be no stopping me." One day, Salazar heard about a monk who claimed that everyone had the potential to become anything they desired. He sought out the holy man, though it took years to find him, and pretended to be a humble man embittered by his lot in life. The monk, whose name was Seng Li, believed Salazar's lies and accepted him as a student. After several years, Salazar finally mastered the power to switch skill sets and access all the abilities he had within himself. He then killed the monk and returned to his home city.

But Salazar was now older, and no longer fast enough and strong enough to be a top assassin. So he selected three young men, each displeased with his place in life, and offered to train them. These men became the first chameleons, and Salazar accepted jobs on their behalf. Assignments were usually assassinations, but some were robberies or information-gathering or even protection. With the money from these jobs, Salazar built the compound and sent his protégés out to find more students. Thus the School of Broad Horizons began.

Salazar still runs the school, though most of the students know him only as Master Sallah and rarely see him. With his senior trainers (his original students), he coordinates the activities of graduates, and his agents pass along job offers that he accepts or rejects based upon his own assessment. When accepting a job, Salazar finds out what chameleons are in the area, and assigns one the task. His agents then convey instructions to the selected graduate, who is expected to comply without question.

Chameleons who prove their loyalty and their lack of scruples can become agents themselves. An agent handles a particular city or region, establishing a permanent residence to create a cover identity. She reports back to the school every week, detailing not only her own activities but the whereabouts and actions of every chameleon in the area. Other chameleons report in to the agent when they arrive, and then check back in before leaving.

An agent who demonstrates her worth may be offered a position as trainer at the mansion or as a recruiter. Recruiters wander from place to place, convening to hold retreats whenever an agent finds a potential recruit. If a recruit seems worthy, she is escorted to Mimic Mansion to begin her training. Trainers live in the compound and spend all their time teaching new students.

Some chameleons react poorly to news of their school's real mission and refuse to handle illegal assignments. Salazar has ways to force their compliance, but these tactics sometimes fail, and a few chameleons have gone rogue. They are actively hunted by agents and recruiters and targeted for death on sight. Some of these rebels wander the world, using their talents as they see fit rather than as Salazar demands.

NPC Reactions

If a chameleon is doing her job efficiently, NPC reactions are based on the class she is mimicking and not on her nature as a chameleon. If word gets out of an adventurer who can carry a sword and shield one day and cast spells the next, reactions change. Commoners, businessmen, and rogues have an attitude of friendly, eager to hear stories about the chameleon's versatility (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). Fighters, barbarians, and rangers may feel the same, but also become annoyed that their own skills are so easily reproduced. Sorcerers and wizards are indifferent or unfriendly, believing that true magic cannot be so easily acquired. Clerics, druids, and paladins are unfriendly or hostile, actively seeking to expose chameleons as frauds; they pretend to have divine powers, which insults the gods and those who receive their genuine favor.

CHAMELEON LORE

Characters with Knowledge (local) or both Gather Information and Perform can research the Chameleons to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "Sometimes, people aren't what they seem. And some of them can seem to be anyone. Like a human chameleon, they blend in."

DC 15: "These people can masquerade as fighters, mages, thieves—anything."

DC 20: "Somehow they learn to mimic each class's abilities, even spellcasting. And they all train at a school somewhere."

DC 30: "Sometimes, these chameleons just seem to be traveling. But strange deaths or burglaries occur when

they're around. And, after all, who'd make a better assassin or thief than someone who can be anyone?"

CHAMELEONS IN THE GAME

It is easy to bring a chameleon into your game, since they can mimic the special abilities of any other class. Their ability to switch class sets makes them versatile, even if they never reach the full potential of any one class. At the same time, chameleons can serve as spies, thieves, and assassins. They could join any group that is moving toward their own goal, both for company and for camouflage.

Chameleons can be fun to play, because they let players dabble in all the existing classes without being tied to one. The class's darker side also makes it fun to roleplay, especially if the character has qualms about her assignments and is considering quitting the organization. The best way to make a chameleon character happy is for them to be useful. Parties that have one member of every class may not need chameleons, but a group with no arcane spellcasters and no rogues may be desperate for their skills. Give them tasks that require changing skill sets, and make sure assignments from Mimic Mansion occasionally arrive to complicate matters.

Adaptation

Chameleons can be reworked as a completely nonmagical class, where they have no spells but use Sleight of Hand to make items "disappear," and potions or powders to create smoke, fog, and fire. They could be made completely magical as well or even psionic, using spells or psionics to actually gain the abilities of other classes.

If you're using the *Eberron Campaign Setting*, the chameleon prestige class should be available to changeling player characters as well as humans and doppelgangers. In this case, the Able Learner feat extends to changelings as well.

Encounters

Chameleons are most common in cities and larger towns. They watch any newcomers, both to gauge any threats and to examine possible new recruits. Chameleons on a mission can go anywhere, from the richest court to the poorest hovel.

EL 6: The PCs enter a noisy bar, and the bartender gives them the only available seats—at a table with a nondescript stranger. She inquires about their recent travels, and offers to trade information about the road. The PCs cannot tell if she is a fighter, a rogue, a priest, or even a spellcaster.

Jonata Quimbel: Female human rogue 5/chameleon 1; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6–5 plus 1d8–1; hp 18; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, *+1 spear*) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ aptitude focus 1/day, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Disguise +11 (+13 acting in character), Concentration +5, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +11, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +6, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +7 (+9 deciphering spells on scrolls), Survival +0 (+2 in urban areas), Use Magic Device +11; Able Learner, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload.

Languages: Common, Elven, Celestial.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Jonata does an extra 3d6 extra points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Jonata may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with her sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Aptitude Focus (Ex): Once per day, Jonata can select one of five areas upon which to focus her ever-shifting talents. After meditating for 1 hour, she gains the noted abilities for 24 hours or until she changes her aptitude focus. Jonata currently has adopted combat focus, providing proficiency in all martial weapons, a +2 competence bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls, and a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves (included). See the chameleon class description for details.

Evasion (Ex): If Jonata is exposed to any effect that normally allows her to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, she takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Trapfinding (Ex): Jonata can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. She can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If her Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, she discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Jonata retains her Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (she still loses his Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Spellbook: 0—*detect magic, light, mage hand, read magic*; 1st—*charm person, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement* (+6 ranged touch), *shield*.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, small wooden shield, *+1 spear*, dagger, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *cloak of resistance +1*, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, backpack, bedroll, waterskin, silk rope (50 ft.), holy symbol (Obad-Hai), spellbook, spell component pouch, belt pouch, flint and tinder, masterwork thieves' tools, 12 gp.

EL 8: The PCs are walking through a city one night when they hear a commotion. Looking up, they see a man climbing down from a second-story window. He reaches the ground, then starts walking casually—directly toward the PCs.

Tyler Sand: Male human cleric 5/chameleon 3; CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 8d8+8; hp 47; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk or Full Atk +7 melee (1d6/18–20, +1 *rapier*) or +6 melee or thrown (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA spells, turn undead 5/day (+2, 2d6+5, 5th; SQ aptitude focus 1/day, bonus feat, mimic class feature 1/day, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +6, Disable Device +5, Disguise +12 (+14 acting in character), Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +6, Sense Motive +9, Search +7, Spellcraft +4; Able Learner, Dodge, Mobility[B], Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Elven.

Aptitude Focus (Ex): Once per day, Tyler can select one of five areas upon which to focus his ever-shifting talents. After meditating for 1 hour, he gains the noted abilities for 24 hours or until he changes his aptitude focus. Tyler currently has adopted the stealth focus, providing trapfinding (see below), uncanny dodge (see below), a +2 competence bonus on Disable Device, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock, and Search checks, and a +2 bonus on Reflex saves (included). See the chameleon class description for details.

Bonus Feat (Ex): At the start of each day, Tyler can choose to change his bonus feat to any other feat for which he meets the prerequisites. His bonus feat for this encounter is Mobility (included).

Mimic Class Feature: Tyler has the ability to mimic certain class features possessed by other characters once per day. See the chameleon class description for details.

Trapfinding (Ex): Tyler can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Tyler retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (he still loses his Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 5th): 0—*detect magic, detect poison* (2), *light, read magic*; 1st—*comprehend languages, disguise self*[D], *divine favor, protection from law, shield of faith*; 2nd—*bull's strength, hold person* (DC 14), *invisibility*[D], *silence* (DC 14); 3rd—*nondetection*[D], *prayer.*

Spellbook: 0—*dancing lights, mage hand*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, hold portal, magic missile, sleep, true strike*; 2nd—*false life, see invisibility, web.*

D: Domain spell. Domains: Luck (reroll one die roll 1/day), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, +1 rapier, dagger, *lens of detection,* masterwork thieves' tools, belt pouch, silk rope (50 ft.), holy symbol (Olidammara), spellbook, 47 gp.

LOREDELVER

"I think of myself as a liberator. It's my job to liberate the ancient lore—not to mention the vast wealth—that has been imprisoned by history."

—Stormwind Vaora, loredelver

Loredelvers are illumian spellcasters who find and explore ruins, disable the magical protections that guard them, and sift through the ancient secrets found within. They rarely spend time in the enclaves of the illumians, instead crisscrossing the world in search of archaic lore for their cabal's library.

BECOMING A LOREDELVER

Most characters become loredelvers after taking at least five levels of wizard and one or two levels of rogue. A few sorcerers wind up in the class, but they need to take extra levels in the rogue class to gain the requisite skill ranks. Bards who lean toward exploration and discovery sometimes enter this class after picking up a level of rogue, but give up significant bardic abilities to do so.

Entry Requirements

Race: Illumian.
Skills: Decipher Script 10 ranks; Disable Device 5 ranks; Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks; Knowledge (dungeoneering) 5 ranks.
Spells or Spell Like Abilities: Ability to cast at least one 3rd-level arcane spell from the divination school.
Special: Trapfinding class feature.

CLASS FEATURES

As a loredelver, your class features relate to your core mission of exploring tombs, ruins, and forgotten sites looking for ancient manuscripts and other lore. Your spellcasting ability continues to advance at nearly its full rate, bolstered by a few spell-like class abilities that augment your ability to find magical auras and defeat traps.

Spells per Day: At each level after 1st, you gain new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you had more than one arcane spellcasting class before becoming a loredelver, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex): Loredelvers extensively study the reports of their fellow loredelvers as well as historical

and magical texts. You can attempt to recall some relevant piece of information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places. See the bard class feature, page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*. You use your loredelver level + your Intelligence modifier (plus levels in bard, if any) to make bardic knowledge checks.

Magical Insight (Ex): A loredelver has an uncanny insight into the workings of magic. You gain a +5 insight bonus on Spellcraft checks made to determine the school of magic of magical auras.

Detect Magic (Sp): A loredelver develops a preternatural sense for the presence of magic. At 2nd level and higher, you can use *detect magic* (as the spell, page 219 of the *Player's Handbook*) at will.

Evasion (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, you have a hair-trigger sense of dangerous magic. If you are exposed to any effect that normally allows you to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, you take no damage with a successful saving throw.

Spontaneous Casting (Su): At 4th level, you gain the ability to spontaneously cast certain spells using your existing arcane spell slots. You can "lose" any prepared spell or spell slot of the designated level to cast a specific spell. You use your highest arcane caster level as the caster level for the spell.

At 4th level and higher, you can "lose" any prepared spell or spell slot of 2nd level or higher to cast *knock* (see page 246 of the *Player's Handbook*).

At 7th level and higher, you can "lose" any prepared spell or spell slot of 4th level or higher to cast *arcane eye* (see page 200 of the *Player's Handbook*).

At 10th level, you can "lose" any prepared spell or spell slot of 6th level or higher to cast *greater dispel magic* (ss page 223 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Fearless (Ex): At 5th level, you have learned to steel yourself against the horrors that guard the places you're exploring. You gain immunity to fear, magical or otherwise.

Arcane Sight (Sp): By the time you reach 6th level, you have honed your sensitivity to the magical auras that surround you. You can use *arcane sight* (as the spell, page 201 of the *Player's Handbook*) at will.

Improved Evasion (Ex): Beginning at 8th level, you can avoid damage from certain attacks with a successful Reflex save and take only half damage on a failed save. See the monk class feature, page 42 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Greater Arcane Sight (Su): At 9th level, you have reached the pinnacle of magical sensitivity. You can use *greater arcane sight* (as the spell, page 201 of the *Player's Handbook*) at will.

PLAYING A LOREDELVER

You have left behind your cabal—perhaps forever—for the thrill of walking where no one has stepped for thousands of years. You relish the challenge of breaking into ancient sites that have kept their secrets for centuries.

But you aren't just a tomb robber. Your cabal has trained you in esoteric techniques that help you overcome magical defenses. In exchange, you deliver to them the ancient tomes you recover, as well as your own journals about your adventures. Any treasure you recover that isn't of academic interest to the cabal is yours to keep.

Combat

Like other spellcasters, you rely almost entirely on your magic in a fight. Becoming a loredelver doesn't slow down your spellcasting progress too much, so you should have potent offensive and defensive spells at your disposal.

But your spellcasting can't always mask your below-average hit points and unfamiliarity with weapons, so you'll often resort to the tried-and-true spellcaster defense: befriending a fighter to stand in front of you.

At higher levels, your loredelver class features can provide an edge in combat. *Arcane eye* is a great reconnaissance tool that can make sure you gain the advantages of good terrain and prefight preparation. *Arcane sight* lets you identify which

Table 5–3: The Loredelver **Hit Die: d6**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic knowledge, magical insight	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	*Detect magic*	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+3	Evasion	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+4	+4	Spontaneous casting (*knock*)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
5th	+2	+1	+4	+4	Fearless	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
6th	+3	+2	+5	+5	*Arcane sight*	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
7th	+3	+2	+5	+5	Spontaneous casting (*arcane eye*)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
8th	+4	+2	+6	+6	Improved evasion	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
9th	+4	+3	+6	+6	*Greater arcane sight*	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
10th	+5	+3	+7	+7	Spontaneous casting (*greater dispel magic*)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Concentration, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (history), Open Lock, Profession, Search, Speak Language, and Spellcraft.

enemies are benefiting from magical effects. When you reach 10th level, your ability to spontaneously cast *greater dispel magic* makes you an effective counter for an enemy spellcaster or a front-line fighter overloaded with magical effects.

Advancement

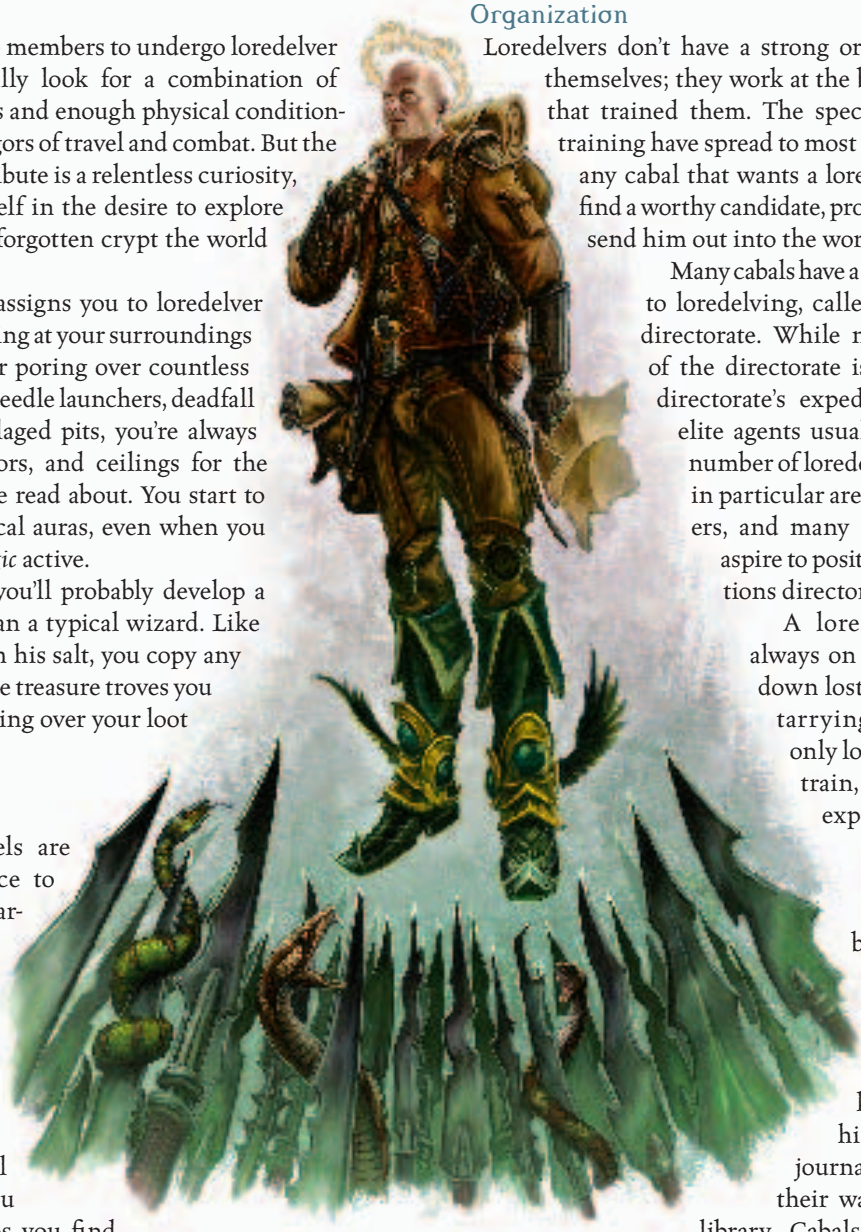
When cabals choose members to undergo loredelver training, they usually look for a combination of spellcasting prowess and enough physical conditioning to survive the rigors of travel and combat. But the most important attribute is a relentless curiosity, which manifests itself in the desire to explore every lost ruin and forgotten crypt the world has to offer.

Once your cabal assigns you to loredelver duty, you begin looking at your surroundings in a new light. After poring over countless diagrams of poison needle launchers, deadfall snares, and camouflaged pits, you're always scanning walls, floors, and ceilings for the kinds of traps you've read about. You start to see flickers of magical auras, even when you don't have *detect magic* active.

As you advance, you'll probably develop a bigger spellbook than a typical wizard. Like any loredelver worth his salt, you copy any useful spells from the treasure troves you uncover before turning over your loot to your cabal.

Resources

Because your travels are ostensibly in service to your cabal, its librarians and researchers are at your disposal. They can point you toward ancient dungeons and warn you about possible traps mentioned in historical texts. And when you turn over the tomes you find and the journals you keep during your travels, cabal researchers might find clues in them that send you on to even more thrilling—and lucrative—adventures.



A loredelver takes danger in stride—and sometimes strides right over it

It's also a class with a built-in excuse to adventure. Illumian cabals know the locations of dungeons, ancient ruins, and other sites rich with adventuring possibilities. The loredelver does the dangerous work, and the cabal provides support and further opportunities to explore.

Organization

Loredelvers don't have a strong organization among themselves; they work at the behest of the cabal that trained them. The specifics of loredelver training have spread to most illumian cabals, so any cabal that wants a loredelver needs only find a worthy candidate, provide training, then send him out into the world with a map.

Many cabals have a directorate devoted to loredelving, called the acquisitions directorate. While not every member of the directorate is a loredelver, the directorate's expedition leaders and elite agents usually include a high number of loredelvers. Quill cabals in particular are rife with loredelvers, and many illumian children aspire to positions in the acquisitions directorate.

A loredelver is almost always on the road tracking down lost lore for the cabal, tarrying at the enclave only long enough to heal, train, and plan the next expedition.

Loredelvers from different cabals rarely congregate, because at least to a degree they're all rivals for the same lore. But every loredelver keeps a journal of his travels, and those journals eventually find their way into the cabal's library. Cabals trade or borrow books with other friendly cabals, and loredelver journals are a prized part of such exchanges. When one loredelver makes annotations in another loredelver's journal, it can mark the beginning of a lively and informative correspondence. Two loredelvers who have never met might use journal annotations to argue about the meaning of a particular rune in ancient High Draconic. But they wouldn't necessarily recognize each other if they were imprisoned together by the same angry dragon.

LOREDELVERS IN THE WORLD

The loredelver prestige class is a good fit for a spellcaster who wants to use magic to perform roguelike functions in the party, such as providing reconnaissance, opening locks, and disabling dangerous traps.

Illus. by M. Phillippi

Perhaps the most famous journals are those of Inkwell Carvin, a loredelver whose exploits are legendary among illumians. Carvin single-handedly braved the ziggurat of Thelm, the Moaning Caves, and Otralak's Tower in his quest to retrieve the dispersed parts of the Library of the Sublime. Five years ago, Carvin stopped checking in with the Inkwell cabal, and many loredelvers suspect he has been killed or captured by the githyanki.

Loredelvers can rise through the ranks of their directorate like any illumian, although few reach leadership positions because they're far too often absent to play the political games needed for high-level promotion. Political considerations aside, most acquisitions directorates function as meritocracies: The more you bring back for the library, the better your chances of promotion.

NPC Reactions

Loredelvers engender a mixture of adulation and envy when they visit the enclave of their cabal. In general, cabal members have an initial attitude of friendly toward them (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). If a political struggle is under way, either in the acquisitions directorate or the cabal as a whole, then the sudden arrival of a loredelver is less welcome, but attitudes rarely drift to worse than indifferent. Attitudes also reflect indifference if a loredelver returns to a cabal that has fallen on hard times during his absence; the cabal resents that the loredelver was off on exciting adventures while the rest of the cabal was dealing with encroaching famine and attacks by foe after foe.

Loredelvers need to tread carefully when it comes to the nonlore treasure they collect from the dungeons and ruins they explore. Most cabals expect loredelvers to turn over information, not treasure, and they assume that loredelvers use their wealth to buy protective items, pay for colleagues (often nonillumian PCs), and otherwise make themselves more effective loredelvers. But a loredelver who comes back from a mission dripping with gold and jewels should be prepared for the cabal's reaction. In general, flaunting wealth from a mission earns a loredelver a –4 circumstance penalty on interactions with most cabal members and a +4 circumstance bonus on interactions with the cabal's youth and other would-be loredelvers.

LOREDELVER LORE

Characters with Knowledge (history) can research individual loredelvers to learn more about them. (While loredelvers aren't historical personages themselves, they're known among historians for the data they provide.) When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "Loredelver is a term the illumians use to describe their archeologists."

DC 15: "Loredelvers are illumian spellcasters who specialize in breaking into tombs and ancient places, looking for old manuscripts, spellbooks, and other items for their libraries."

DC 20: "The loredelvers are trying to track down the thousands of books that the illumians lost when the githyanki sacked their library."

Additionally, loredelvers appear frequently in the tales told by bards. Bardic knowledge checks for information about loredelvers reduce the DC of the check by 5.

LOREDELVERS IN THE GAME

Because they're beyond the day-to-day reach of their cabals, loredelver PCs are easy to work into an ongoing game. Simply arrange for a loredelver to visit his cabal's enclave from time to time, perhaps to have researchers study a mysterious map or translate the inscription the PCs found in a tomb somewhere.

If you have a loredelver at your table, make sure you provide magic traps for him to find and disable. Loredelvers love site-based adventures such as treks into ancient ruins and dungeons. At higher levels, you can provide challenges that a loredelver can overcome with his class features, such as encounters that depend on noticing magical auras (a disguised villain or a room hidden by illusion) and lots of dangerous magic to dispel.

Loredelvers also provide a useful adventure hook even if none of the PCs are interested in the prestige class. Loredelvers may hire PCs to act as expedition guards or do a preliminary exploration of a ruin in a loredelver's absence. If the PCs find a loredelver's journal, they'll have enough clues for a dozen adventures in their hands.

Adaptation

While the loredelver fills an important role in illumian culture, you can adapt the class to other groups that have an interest in ancient lore. The prestige class is a natural for any secret society with spellcasters who want to break into magically guarded places.

Encounters

If the PCs encounter a loredelver in the middle of an adventure, the loredelver almost always represents a rival who is intent on exploring the same site as the PCs. To put a classic twist on the rivalry, establish the loredelver as an antagonist and then introduce a powerful monster or other threat to both the PCs and the loredelver. The PCs might want to make a temporary alliance with the loredelver, but both sides should be alert for a double-cross.

EL 9: Newsun Ralouf is a novice loredelver exploring in the company of two jann who have promised to lead him to great wealth nearby. Ralouf has already cast *mage armor* and *darkvision;* his statistics below reflect this.

Jann (2): hp 35, 32; *Monster Manual* p. 116.

Newsun Ralouf: Male illumian rogue 1/transmuter 6/loredelver 1; CR 8; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1 plus 7d4+7; hp 32; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch

12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk or Full Atk +4 melee (1d6, masterwork quarterstaff); SA sneak attack +1d6, spells; SQ bardic knowledge +5, familiar, familiar benefits, glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils, shadow familiarity, trapfinding; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Balance +6, Concentration +9 (+13 casting defensively), Decipher Script +16, Disable Device +14, Forgery +6, Gather Information +5, Hide +6, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +12, Spellcraft +5 (+10 to determine magical auras), Spot +7, Survival +1 (+3 underground); Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Investigator, Scribe Scroll.

Languages: Common, Illumian, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Ralouf does an extra 1d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Ralouf may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Familiar: Ralouf's familiar is a cat named Onyxian. The familiar uses the better of its own and Ralouf's base save bonuses. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Familiar Benefits: Ralouf gains special benefits from having a familiar. Onyxian grants Ralouf a +3 bonus on Move Silently checks (included in the above statistics).

Alertness (Ex): *The familiar grants its master Alertness as long as it is within 5 feet.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): The cat can deliver touch spells for Ralouf (see Familiars, page 52 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Empathic Link (Su): Ralouf can communicate telepathically with his familiar at a distance of up to 1 mile. Ralouf has the same connection to an item or a place that his familiar does.

Share Spells (Su): Ralouf may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his familiar if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. He may also cast a spell a target of "You" on his familiar.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Ralouf interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See the illumian racial description, page 53, for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Ralouf's combination of power sigils provides him with the *naenkrau* illumian word. During the time when he prepares his spells, he may choose to leave a spell slot unfilled in order to add 1 to the save DCs of all his other spells of that level. He may leave up to two spell slots unfilled, and multiple unfilled slots don't stack.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Ralouf's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or his illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Ralouf's *krau* power sigil grants a +2 bonus to Ralouf's caster level (included). His *naen* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Intelligence checks and all Intelligence-based skill checks (included).

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): Ralouf has a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the shadow descriptor.

Trapfinding (Ex): Ralouf can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Wizard Spells Prepared (caster level 8th; prohibited schools illusion and necromancy); 0—*dancing lights, detect poison, mage hand, message, open/close*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, feather fall, mage armor* (already cast), *magic missile, shield*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, darkvision* (already cast), *scorching ray* (+5 ranged touch), *spider climb, web* (DC 16); 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball* (DC 17), *fly, haste*.

Spellbook: as above plus 0—all others except illusion and necromancy; 1st—*comprehend languages, identify, magic weapon, protection against evil, sleep*; 2nd—*arcane lock, glitterdust, knock, locate object, resist energy, rope trick*; 3rd—*arcane sight, clairaudience/clairvoyance, heroism, magic circle against evil, tongues*.

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, *headband of intellect* +2, *bag of holding* (Type I), *wand of magic missile* (3rd level; 50 charges), scroll of *passwall*, spellbook, 100 gp pearl (for *identify* spell), masterwork thieves' tools.

Onyxian, Cat Familiar: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 8; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp –9; Atk +5 melee (1d2–4, claw) Full Atk +7 melee (1d2–4, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d3–4, bite); SQ improved evasion, low-light vision, scent, speak with master; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8; Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +6, Hide +14*, Jump +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse[B].

Improved Evasion (Ex): If Onyxian is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Skills: Cats have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks.

Cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

Speak with Master (Ex): Onyxian can communicate verbally with Ralouf. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

EL 16: Stormwind Vaora is scouting out territory for a future expedition. She will employ *arcane eye* to observe the PCs before revealing herself to them. She has a *teleport* spell prepared, and uses it if she falls below half her maximum hit points or otherwise feels unduly threatened.

Vaora's statistics reflect the fact that she has cast *mage armor, see invisibility, stoneskin,* and one of her *teleports* before the PCs encounter her.

Stormwind Vaora: Female illumian rogue 3/diviner 5/loredelver 8; CR 16; Medium humanoid (human); HD 11d6+11 plus 5d4+5; hp 69; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +8; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d6+2/18–20, *+1 rapier*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+2/18–20, *+1 rapier*); SA sneak attack +2d6, spells; SQ *arcane sight*, bardic knowledge +14, damage reduction 10/adamantine, *detect magic*, fearless, glyphic resonance, illumian word, improved evasion, luminous sigils, power sigils, *see invisibility,* shadow familiarity, spontaneous casting, trap sense +1, trapfinding; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +17, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 22, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +14, Balance +24, Climb +15, Concentration +20, Decipher Script +27, Disable Device +27, Hide +9, Jump +16, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +13, Listen +5, Open Lock +22, Move Silently +9, Search +27, Spellcraft +27 (+32 to determine magical auras), Spot +5, Survival –1 (+1 underground, +1 following tracks), Tumble +11; Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Power Sigil (*krau*) (*chain lightning, greater dispel magic*), Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Illumian, Abyssal, Draconic, Elven, Infernal.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Vaora does an extra 2d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Vaora may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with her sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Arcane Sight (Sp): At will.

Detect Magic (Sp): At will.

Familiar: Due to the dangerous nature of her profession, Vaora has declined to summon a familiar.

Fearless (Ex): Immunity to fear.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): As an illumian, Vaora interacts strangely with symbol-based spells. See the illumian racial description, page 53, for details.

Illumian Word (Su): Vaora's combination of power sigils provides her with the *naenkrau* illumian word. During the time when she prepares her spells, she may choose to leave a spell slot unfilled in order to add 1 to the save DCs of all her other spells of that level (including spells from other classes). She may leave up to two spell slots unfilled, and multiple unfilled slots don't stack.

Improved Evasion (Ex): If Vaora is exposed to any effect that normally allows her to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, she takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit Vaora's head provide illumination equal to that of a candle. She can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or her illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): Vaora's *krau* power sigil grants a +2 bonus to her caster level (included). Her *naen* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Intelligence checks and all Intelligence-based skill checks (included).

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): Vaora has a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the shadow descriptor.

Spontaneous Casting (Su): Vaora can "lose" any 2nd-level prepared spell to cast *knock*, or any 4th-level prepared spell to cast *arcane eye*. Caster level 14th.

Trapfinding (Ex): Vaora can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. She can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If her Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, she discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Wizard Spells Prepared (caster level 14th; prohibited school necromancy): 0—*detect poison, light, mage hand* (3); 1st—*comprehend languages, mage armor* (already cast), *magic missile* (3), *protection from evil, shield*; 2nd—*blur, detect thoughts* (DC 18), *invisibility* (2), *scorching ray* (2) (+11 ranged touch), *see invisibility* (already cast); 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic* (2), *fireball* (DC 20), *fly, haste*; 4th—*dimension door, ice storm, locate creature, polymorph, stoneskin* (already cast); 5th—*cone of cold* (DC 23), *prying eyes, teleport* (2, one already cast), one slot left unfilled; 6th—*chain lightning* (DC 24), *greater dispel magic, flesh to stone* (DC 23), one slot left unfilled; 7th—*delayed blast fireball, forcecage.*

Spellbook: as above plus 0—all other except necromancy; 1st—*animate rope, charm person, expeditious retreat, feather fall, hold portal, identify, magic weapon, mount, sleep, Tenser's floating disk, unseen servant*; 2nd—*arcane lock, cat's grace, continual flame, knock, locate object, Melf's acid arrow, resist energy, rope trick, spider climb, web, whispering wind*; 3rd—*arcane sight, displacement, gaseous form, heroism, lightning bolt, magic circle*

against evil, phantom steed, protection from energy, suggestion, tongues; 4th—*fire shield, illusory wall, remove curse, wall of fire*; 5th—*break enchantment, dismissal, mirage arcana, overland flight, passwall, Rary's telepathic bond, sending, wall of force, wall of stone*; 6th—*greater heroism, legend lore, Tenser's transformation, true seeing, wall of iron*; 7th—*banishment, ethereal jaunt, limited wish, phase door, power word blind, project image, greater scrying, greater teleport.*

Possessions: +1 cold iron rapier, headband of intellect +4, gloves of Dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +4, staff of passage (9 charges), *wand of web* (50 charges), scroll of *teleport object*, scroll of *disintegrate*, scroll of *shadow walk*, spellbook, diamond dust (250 gp for *stoneskin spell*), ointment (250 gp for *true seeing* spell), spell component pouch.

MENACING BRUTE

"I wouldn't draw that sword if I was you."

—Wogar, menacing brute

Life as a half-orc in a human city is never easy, and some half-orcs are driven to desperation by the struggle of living in a place where one is never truly welcome. The menacing brute takes advantage of how most humans fear half-orcs, playing on that dread to make his living. He combines resourcefulness and determination with a ready wit and the willingness to do jobs that others find distasteful—and do them well.

BECOMING A MENACING BRUTE

Menacing brutes typically combine levels of fighter with one or two levels of rogue. Fighter levels are essential for bringing the brute's base attack bonus to a respectable level, while brutes enjoy adding a little sneak attack damage to their first solid hits in melee. Rogue levels are not necessary, but they can help a half-orc who is not exceptionally intelligent meet the skill prerequisites for the class.

Entry Requirements

Race: Half-orc.
Alignment: Any nongood.
Base Attack Bonus: +5.
Skills: Intimidate 5 ranks, Knowledge (local) 2 ranks, Search 2 ranks.
Feats: Iron Will.

Table 5–4: The Menacing Brute **Hit Die: d10**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Demoralizing stare
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Resourceful search
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Sneak attack +1d6
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Ruthless cut
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Making an example

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Climb, Gather Information, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Listen, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot.

CLASS FEATURES

The menacing brute's class features focus on making you an intimidating presence on the battlefield. You can demoralize your opponents with a stare and strike terror into their hearts as you slay their companions.

Demoralizing Stare (Ex): You gain a competence bonus on Intimidate checks equal to your menacing brute level. In addition, when you successfully use the Intimidate skill to demoralize an opponent, the target remains shaken for an additional 1 round per class level.

Resourceful Search (Ex): At 2nd level, you become extremely resourceful at finding "discarded" pieces of equipment. Once per day, you can attempt a Search check in order to find any nonmagical item of your choice, with a maximum market price of 200 gp, without paying for it. The gold piece value of the item determines the time it takes for you to find it, as well as the minimum size of community in which it can be found (see the table below). For example, if you are searching for a wagon (35 gp), you would need to look in a small town or larger community and succeed on a DC 15 Search check after spending 2d4×10 minutes searching. If you sought a breastplate (200 gp), you could find it in a metropolis by making a DC 25 Search check and spending 2d4 hours digging through alleyways, trash bins, and the like. You can never find a masterwork item or magic item of any value while using this ability.

GP Value	Search DC	Search Time	Minimum Community Size
up to 20 gp	10	1d4×10 minutes	Hamlet
21–50 gp	15	2d4×10 minutes	Small town
51–100 gp	20	1d4 hours	Small city
101–200 gp	25	2d4 hours	Metropolis

Sneak Attack (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, you deal extra damage when flanking an opponent or any time the target would be denied its Dexterity bonus (except on ranged attacks, which must be point-blank to deliver the extra damage). See the rogue class feature, page 50 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Ruthless Cut (Ex): At 4th level and higher, you gain a +4 bonus on a roll to confirm a threat on a critical hit.

Making an Example (Ex): At 5th level, any time you deal enough damage with a melee attack to drop a creature (typically by dropping it to less than 0 hit points or killing it), all foes within 30 feet of the enemy must succeed on a Will save (DC 15 + your Cha modifier) or cower until the start of their next turn. If the blow that dropped the creature was a critical hit, add +4 to the save DC. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

PLAYING A MENACING BRUTE

Throw your weight around, and if you can toss in some witty or at least bitterly sarcastic comments while you're doing

it, so much the better. Your class name says it all—you're accustomed to using your muscle to get your way. You lean on the recalcitrant, squash the rebellious, and murder the opposition. Nothing gets between you and getting a job done.

You are probably a member of some illegal (or at least shady) organization that employs you for your particular combination of skills. This organization might be a crime gang, a casino or similar business where you help maintain order, or simply a rich patron with his fingers in a few unscrupulous operations. In exchange for doing your employer's dirty work, you earn a degree of respect and prestige within the organization—nobody else wants to do your job. Most people are afraid of you, so it's easy to intimidate the petty thieves and con artists in your organization. You have some freedom to pursue other opportunities when your services aren't needed, which leaves you open to adventure—though usually you're expected to stay close to your organization's base of operations.

Combat

As a bully, you're happier leaning on opponents to get your way than you are actually wading into a fair fight. You use your Intimidate skill to make sure your enemies aren't at their best when facing you. Once combat starts in earnest, take every opportunity to flank your enemies for the extra sneak attack damage. That said, you're just as good in straight-up melee as any other fighter, so there's no reason to hang back or slink around in the shadows. Your style is blunt and direct, and that applies in combat as well as in conversation. Hit your foes hard enough, and they won't hit back.

You're at your best when your side outnumbers your opponents. Other thugs can help you flank your enemies, and if they have the sneak attack ability too, you'll put flanked enemies down quickly. Once you reach 5th level, you can sometimes end a combat quickly by dispatching one opponent early on and making the rest cower. Cowering creatures lose their Dexterity bonus, so they're susceptible to sneak attacks from your allies, flanking or no flanking. Once the first one falls, the others quickly follow.

Advancement

You probably started on the road to becoming a menacing brute early in life, figuring that being big and strong gave you an edge. Before long, someone else recognized your strength and your ability to intimidate your foes as well as your resourcefulness and wit and offered you a job. Many people would have balked at that job, whether it involved extortion or murder, but you grabbed the opportunity and proved your worth.

Now that you can officially call yourself a menacing brute (though you've probably been one all your adult life), you continue in the same sort of work. Your employment advancement is not necessarily tied to your advancement in the prestige class, and you might drift from employer to employer as the need for your services changes. You might be a full-time freelancer, taking odd jobs of a particularly violent sort as they come up, and filling gaps in your schedule with more traditional adventuring. At all times, you continue to practice the basic tools of your trade: intimidation and brutality.

As you gain levels, you have a good number of skill points to spend (perhaps even if you have an Intelligence penalty) and some flexibility about how to spend them. Most menacing brutes spend skill points on Intimidate at every level, making them exceptionally good at that particular skill. Even if you don't buy Intimidate at every level, your competency doesn't suffer much, thanks to your demoralizing stare ability. Whichever approach to Intimidate you choose, consider increasing your ability further with the Menacing Demeanor feat (see page 153). Your skill and feat choices depend on the kinds of jobs you typically pursue. If keeping an ear to the street is important, buy ranks in Gather Information and Knowledge (local). If stealth is more important, consider buying ranks in Hide and Move Silently as cross-class skills.

Resources

One of your defining characteristics is the ingenuity reflected in your resourceful search class ability. You are supposed to be self-reliant and have the wherewithal to acquire what you need to do your job properly. At the same time, you are either a member of a powerful organization or the employee of a powerful individual, and the organization or the employer has resources that can help you accomplish the tasks set before you. To a certain extent, your resourceful search ability reflects the resources available by virtue of your position. When you need more valuable gear than you can scrounge using that ability, you might still be able to gain some benefit from your organization or employer. If you're willing to carry and use stolen goods that could land you in (more) trouble, you can acquire most gear (mundane or magical) for 90% of its market price. Unless you're willing to go into full-time work as a fence, you are limited to one significant purchase of this sort per month of game time.

MENACING BRUTES IN THE WORLD

Menacing brutes fill a role common in urban crime stories: the thug who leans on people until they come around to the criminal mastermind's way of thinking. Menacing brutes might appear in any campaign where organized crime exists, whether it takes the form of a small local thieves' guild or a larger organization dedicated to fear and intimidation for profit.

Organization

Menacing brutes find work in a tremendous variety of organizations, ranging from the wildly illegal to the

merely shady. By their nature, menacing brutes are rarely an integral part of such organizations. They are freelancers, called in to deal with specific troublesome situations, and they are most effective when close ties to the structures of power do not hinder them. A menacing brute's job might involve extorting "protection" money from local businesses, breaking up fights, kicking out rowdies, standing behind his employer to look intimidating, acting as a bodyguard, destroying property, or killing competitors and enemies.

NPC Reactions

A menacing brute wields the power he does precisely because others fear him. Playing on the innate fear that half-orcs inspire just happens to be the brute's stock in trade. Most NPCs have an initial reaction of unfriendly toward a menacing brute, though the brute's Intimidate skill often makes them behave friendly (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Members of law enforcement organizations, as well as people whom a brute has previously intimidated, are usually hostile toward a menacing brute. Other criminals are indifferent to friendly, depending on their relationship to the brute and his organization. Few people are helpful.

MENACING BRUTE LORE

Characters with Knowledge (local) can research menacing brutes or the organizations they work for to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "Some half-orcs thrive on fear and use intimidation to get their way."

DC 15: "Certain half-orcs are particularly skilled at intimidation and work as enforcers for criminal organizations." This check result also reveals a basic sketch of the organization and the kinds of activities it is involved in.

DC 20: More details about the organization: the areas where it is strongest, specific locations where members are commonly seen, and so on.

A DC 20 Gather Information check can allow a character to arrange a meeting with an NPC menacing brute.

MENACING BRUTES IN THE GAME

Menacing brutes probably already exist in your campaign, whether they have this prestige class or not. If the players in your campaign have any interaction with an illegal or shady organization, sending a menacing brute to lean on them can be a logical extension of that interaction. (Since PCs are not particularly vulnerable to intimidation, a higher-level menacing brute works better as an NPC opponent than one with a single level in the prestige class.)

If your campaign is not strongly oriented toward the PCs as champions of good arrayed against the forces of evil, a player character could become a menacing brute. The class works best in a campaign focused on activity in an urban center, and the player will be happiest if there is ample opportunity for interaction with NPCs (rather than monsters). Even so, there's no reason why a menacing brute can't wander into a dungeon from time to time.

Wogar, a menacing brute, hopes to turn his half-orc heritage into an advantage

Illus. by R. Spencer

Adaptation

The menacing brute is a fairly generic class and should require little adaptation to use in any campaign. You could use it without alteration in any evil or criminal organization, such as the Zhentarim in Toril or the Order of the Emerald Claw in Eberron. (Eberron's dragonmarked mercantile houses undoubtedly make use of menacing brutes as well, though they are more likely to disavow all knowledge of their activities.)

You might choose to significantly alter the class by opening it to races other than half-orcs. The class is designed to expand a particular aspect of the half-orc mind-set: the realization that humans fear half-orcs, and a savvy half-orc can exploit that fear for personal gain. If you open the class to other races, you might add an additional feat requirement,

such as Persuasive, to reflect the idea that the character should have an innately frightening demeanor.

Encounters

Most encounters with menacing brutes devolve quickly into combat.

EL 10: Wogar is a generic menacing brute, sent to coerce the PCs into some course of action desired by the villains in the campaign. He tries to use Intimidate to get his way, but if that fails he resorts to his flail while attempting to use Intimidate to demoralize the PCs.

Wogar: Male half-orc rogue 1/fighter 5/menacing brute 4; CR 10; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 1d6+2 plus 9d10+18; hp 77; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d10+9/19–20, *+1 human bane heavy flail*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+9/19–20, *+1 human bane heavy flail*); SA ruthless cut, sneak attack +2d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., demoralizing stare, half-orc traits, resourceful search; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Forgery +4, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +23, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +5, Search +8, Sense Motive +3, Spot +5, Survival –1 (+1 in urban areas); Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Menacing Demeanor, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy flail), Weapon Specialization (heavy flail).

Languages: Common, Orc.

Ruthless Cut (Ex): Wogar gains a +4 bonus on any roll to confirm a threat of a critical hit.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Wogar does an extra 2d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Wogar may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Demoralizing Stare (Ex): Wogar gains a +4 competence bonus on Intimidate checks (included in the statistics above). In addition, when he successfully uses the Intimidate skill to demoralize an opponent, the target is shaken for 5 rounds.

Half-Orc Traits: For all effects related to race, Wogar is considered an orc.

Resourceful Search (Ex): Once per day, Wogar can attempt a Search check to find any nonmagical item of his choice, with a maximum market price of 200 gp, without paying for it.

Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 human bane heavy flail, gauntlets of ogre power, cloak of resistance +1, 35 gp.

OUTCAST CHAMPION

"We are not half-humans, inferior to you by virtue of sharing only half your blood. We are a race of our own, and we will not lay down our swords until we are a nation of our own, masters of our own destiny."

—Ethirindel, Crown Prince of Everyn

Outcast champions bring hope to those who have no place in society. They lead by example, but their methods differ widely. Some outcast champions unite under the banner of freedom and dignity, while others stir their charges with talk of rightful conquest of their oppressors. While one outcast champion might employ stealth and subtle measures to achieve his goals, another announces his intentions with a bloody sword held aloft.

BECOMING AN OUTCAST CHAMPION

Almost any half-human character can qualify as an outcast champion by 5th level. Paladins, fighters, bards, and rogues are the most common outcast champions, due to the class's focus on martial leadership. Even the occasional barbarian or monk finds cause to rally his comrades and take up arms against oppressive regimes.

Entry Requirements

Race: Half-elf, half-orc, or half-ogre.
Skills: Diplomacy 8 ranks or Intimidate 8 ranks.

Table 5–5: The Outcast Champion — **Hit Die: d10**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Aura of confidence
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Avenging strike
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Desperate fury
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Teamwork
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Desperate fury (share with allies)

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Climb, Craft, Diplomacy, Disguise, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Move Silently, and Survival.

CLASS FEATURES

The outcast champion's class features focus on working with a small group of allies against overwhelming odds.

Aura of Confidence (Ex): Your presence emboldens allies within 30 feet who can see you (including yourself). They add your class level as a morale bonus on their Will saves. This effect is lost if you fall unconscious or die.

Avenging Strike (Ex): You are surrounded by allies who rely on you for victory, and you take this responsibility to heart. You can attempt an avenging strike on an enemy who has dealt damage to an ally of yours within the last hour. The avenging strike must be delivered with a melee attack. You add your Charisma modifier (if positive) to your attack roll

and deal an extra 1d6 points of damage per outcast champion level. If you accidentally strike a creature that has not dealt damage to an ally within the last hour, the avenging strike has no effect, but that use of the ability is still expended. You may use an avenging strike once per day per point of Charisma bonus (minimum 1/day).

Desperate Fury (Ex): You are at your best when times are worst. Beginning at 3rd level, once per day when you are reduced to fewer than one-half your full normal hit points, or when you are fatigued or exhausted, you can enter a state of desperate fury. While in a desperate fury, you gain a +2 morale bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. The desperate fury lasts for 3 rounds + 1 round per point of your (newly improved) Constitution bonus. Unlike with a barbarian's rage, you have no penalties or limitations while in a desperate fury; however, if you become frightened, panicked, or cowering, the desperate fury ends immediately.

At 5th level, you become able to share the effect of your desperate fury with allies within 30 feet who can see you. These allies gain the same benefits as you for as long as your desperate fury lasts (even if an ally becomes frightened, panicked, or cowering).

Teamwork (Ex): You are skilled at creating a strong bond of teamwork between yourself and your allies. Starting at 4th level, whenever you or any ally within 30 feet who can see or hear you uses the aid another action, the bonus provided on attack rolls, AC, or skill checks improves by 2 (from +2 to +4).

PLAYING AN OUTCAST CHAMPION

If you have taken up the role of an outcast champion, the plight of your people is the most important factor in your world. Their suffering goads you to action, and the prospect of their freedom makes all your troubles seem worthwhile. To others, you might seem obsessed, and your intensity puts people off. But their opinions don't matter to you—all that matters is the struggle to bring hope to the hopeless.

As an outcast champion, you might be the leader of an organization dedicated to the freedom of a certain group of half-elves, half-orcs, half-ogres, or some other marginalized and oppressed people. If you are not the leader, you hold a position of authority—usually a military position, but that may depend on your background and expertise. As the name of the class suggests, outcast champions are never minor functionaries or behind-the-scenes players. You stand as an exemplar of your race and your cause.

Combat

Your place in a battle is usually leading from the front. Your class features work best when you are in melee with your allies close at hand. Your attack bonus and hit points are as good as a fighter's, and you probably have the weapon and armor proficiencies to stand toe to toe with your enemies. Use your avenging strike to concentrate on taking down the foes who are dealing the most damage to you or your allies. Try to draw enemy fire—you should have enough hit points to soak up damage for a while, and when you become sorely wounded, you only become more fearsome (and receive an extra store of hit points) thanks to your desperate fury ability.

You should also take the initiative to coordinate your allies in the battle. They look to you as a leader, and you feel a sense of responsibility for keeping them alive. Make sure they stay within 30 feet of you, so that they benefit from the effect of your aura of confidence, teamwork, and (once you reach 5th level) desperate fury abilities. If members of the party are having trouble hitting their opponents, instruct them to use the aid another action—a +4 bonus on a character's attack or AC is far more useful than a failed attack.

Advancement

Maybe you chose the role of an outcast champion, but it is equally possible that it chose you—or, more specifically, that the members of the community you support have chosen you to represent them and lead their struggle for freedom and justice. You have at least a nugget of true leadership potential, reflected in your interaction skills. You can inspire people to do what you want them to do, either through diplomatic persuasion or through intimidating coercion. Desperate people are always looking for leaders or saviors, and you have the ability to back up your words with actions.

Your advancement as an outcast champion is not so much about training as it is about developing your natural talents and strengthening the bond that connects you to your community. Your early abilities involve forging your own resolve and tempering your fury into a weapon. Your confidence inspires others, and eventually your desperate fury does the same. By 4th level, you broaden your focus to include a real sense of leadership.

It is a good idea to expand your skills as you advance in this class. If you met the entry requirements with ranks in Diplomacy, then put points in Intimidate, or vice versa. Having multiple options for how you manage people can be useful. Of course, it's never a bad idea to stick with your strengths as well, increasing your ranks in the skill that got you into the class in the first place. The Leadership feat (if your DM allows it) can be a good way to develop your position within your community, allowing you to marshal followers to help your cause.

Resources

Almost by definition, the members of your community have little in the way of material resources to assist your struggle for their liberation. That said, you can always rely on their hospitality, such as it is: A bed of straw and a cold fireplace might be all they have to offer, but as their champion, you are always welcome to whatever they have.

Your community can provide much more than material goods. When the law comes looking for you, you can count on a hiding place in a barn or shed. When you need to sneak into the city to raid the baron's manor, you can hide in a barrel on the vintner's cart or among the sheep being brought to market. Your companions can usually benefit from such favors as well, assuming they share in your struggle on behalf of the dispossessed.

OUTCAST CHAMPIONS IN THE WORLD

The outcast champion is not an isolated character—he embodies social forces in the campaign. If dispossessed half-elves or a half-orc underclass exists in your campaign, then the outcast champion should be available to rally these oppressed communities.

Organization

Outcast champions are not organized into a single group, but by their nature they are part of organizations or movements. An outcast champion might never interact with another member of the same prestige class, but he is responsible to a community, the group of outcast half-humans he represents and for whose liberation he fights.

An outcast champion stands as the representative of a popular uprising or movement for change. If he is not the leader in fact, he might be in charge of a group's military affairs or defenses. An outcast champion has a specialized role within his organization. He is more likely to lead a raid on the treasury where the taxes are stored than to lobby for change in the city council chamber, and would rather hunt down a ruthless sheriff who slaughtered a half-orc family than petition the baron for justice in the case. Even if some members of the organization work for change in political or diplomatic ways, the typical outcast champion prefers a more active role.

For outcast champions, the struggle of their people is integral to their lives. It motivates every adventure and consumes every waking thought. The exact nature of their activities, however, depends largely on the status of the community they serve. If the community has already risen in open revolt, then the champion's life is one long military campaign, leading strike teams against the enemy in strategic locations. More often, however, the oppressed people continue to eke out a meager subsistence on their farms or in their ghetto, while the outcast champion does what he can to better their lot without their active participation. He might plunder ancient ruins to bring wealth into his community, or fight his way up the feudal chain of command until he confronts some distant emperor to win freedom for his people.

Some movements that include outcast champions are rigidly organized military operations, in which every fighting member has a rank and position. Most, however, are loosely organized, if they actually have any definite structure at all. An outcast champion might claim some rank or title, or their community might bestow one on him ("Champion" being a common title of this nature), but that rank rarely has significance beyond the renown that the champion earns through his actions. Some outcast champions style themselves kings or princes, but such titles are more expressions of hopeful anticipation than of political reality.

NPC Reactions

As might be expected, any individual who belongs to a group an outcast champion fights against has a low opinion of the character. If an outcast champion is actively fighting against a local ruler, that ruler and the forces of law serving that ruler (soldiers, constables, and so on) have an initial attitude of hostile toward the character and any members of his movement or organization (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). Most citizens of the area have an unfriendly attitude, unless they are sympathetic to the champion's cause. Sympathetic characters have an initial reaction of friendly, while members of the movement are initially helpful. Few greet an outcast champion with indifference, unless they are unaware of his identity and his mission.

OUTCAST CHAMPION LORE

Characters can use Knowledge (local) or Gather Information to research a particular outcast champion or his community and learn more about him. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: Basic information about the outcast champion's half-human community: Some members of the community feel oppressed and marginalized, or the community is in open revolt. No specifics about the individual.

DC 15: The existence of the outcast champion: The people of this community look to a hero they believe will throw off the oppressor's yoke or lead them to freedom.

DC 20: The name of the outcast champion and some details about his activities and abilities.

OUTCAST CHAMPIONS IN THE GAME

It's easy to introduce an outcast champion into an ongoing campaign. If your campaign includes a group of oppressed half-humans, an outcast champion could suddenly arise within that community and galvanize it into action. Of course, even if such a group hasn't appeared in the campaign, it's easy to postulate that the PCs might simply never have noticed it. Alternatively, the player characters might begin hearing rumors of an uprising in a distant land where their adventures are leading them.

A PC outcast champion works best if the rest of the players are on board with the character concept. They might be of the same race, or at least associated with the

champion's community somehow. Or they could simply be sympathetic to the champion's cause and methods, willing to participate in adventures related to the ultimate goal of freedom or vengeance for the champion's oppressed community. However, even if the other PCs have no interest in the outcast champion's mission, an outcast champion character can remain involved in his community's struggle, even if only by sharing some of his treasure with the leaders of the community.

Adaptation

The outcast champion is a fairly generic class, and should fit into any campaign with little or no customization.

Encounters

An encounter with an outcast champion is most interesting if it involves the champion's cause. If the PCs oppose the champion, then a combat such as the EL 8 encounter described below is appropriate. If the PCs are actually or potentially sympathetic to the champion's cause, then an interesting diplomatic or roleplaying encounter can result, such as the EL 12 encounter described below. An NPC outcast champion is almost always encountered with followers or allies who are part of his community's military operations.

EL 8: Gruthak is a half-orc outcast champion who is trying to persuade a nearby tribe of orcs to invade the PCs' homeland to "liberate" the half-orcs living in that land. He is accompanied by five 1st-level half-orc barbarians (use Table 4–12, page 113 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, to generate statistics and gear for these followers).

Gruthak: Male half-orc barbarian 5/outcast champion 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 5d12+15 plus 2d10+4; hp 70; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +13 melee (1d12+6/×3, masterwork greataxe); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d12+6/×3, masterwork greataxe); SA avenging strike 1/day, rage 2/day; SQ aura of confidence, darkvision 60 ft., half-orc traits, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +11, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +10, Listen +4, Spot +2; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Languages: Common, Orc.

Avenging Strike (Ex): Once per day, Gruthak can attempt to use an avenging strike on an enemy who has dealt damage to an ally of his within the last hour. The avenging strike must be delivered with a melee attack. Gruthak deals an extra 2d6 points of damage with a successful avenging strike attack.

Rage (Ex): Twice per day, Gruthak can enter a state of fierce rage that lasts for 8 rounds. The following changes are in effect as long as he rages: hp increase by 14; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d12+9, masterwork greataxe); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d12+9, masterwork greataxe); SV Fort +13, Will +6; Str 22, Con 20. At the end of his rage, Gruthak is fatigued for the duration of the encounter.

Aura of Confidence (Ex): Gruthak and his allies within 30 feet who can see him gain a +2 morale bonus on their Will saves. (This bonus is already included in Gruthak's statistics.)

Half-Orc Traits: For all effects related to race, a half-orc is considered an orc.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Gruthak cannot be flanked and can only be sneak attacked by a character who has at least 9 levels of rogue.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Gruthak retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (he still loses his Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Possessions: +1 breastplate, masterwork greataxe, *gauntlets of ogre power, cloak of resistance +1, potion of cure light wounds, potion of shield of faith +2,* 90 gp.

Ethirindel, a half-elf outcast champion who demands a homeland for his race

EL 12: Ethirindel is the self-proclaimed crown prince of Everyn, a nascent nation of half-elves. Ethirindel is the military champion of a separatist movement aimed at creating a homeland for a large number of half-elves currently living in adjacent elf and human lands. This movement is politically active in both lands and publicly disavows the violence that is becoming increasingly common between the factions. While Ethirindel is involved in diplomatic missions, he

Illus. by E. Cox

also secretly masterminds and personally leads bloody raids on human and elf villages and caravans. He might be encountered in either arena.

Ethirindel: Male half-elf aristocrat 1/fighter 7/outcast champion 5; CR 12; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 1d8+1 plus 12d10+12; hp 87; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +12; Grp +15; Atk +17 melee (1d8+6, *+1 elf bane longsword*) or +15 ranged (1d8+4, *+1 human bane composite longbow*); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+6, *+1 elf bane longsword*) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+4, *+1 human bane composite longbow*); SA avenging strike 2/day, desperate fury 1/day; SQ aura of confidence, half-elf traits, low-light vision, teamwork; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +10 (+12 against enchantments); Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +9, Hide +4, Intimidate +21, Jump +8, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +5, Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Search +2, Spot +1, Survival +4 (+6 in urban areas); Blind-Fight, Far Shot, Improved Sunder, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Languages: Common, Elven, Goblin.

Avenging Strike (Ex): Twice per day, Ethirindel can attempt to use an avenging strike on an enemy who has dealt damage to an ally within the last hour. The avenging strike must be delivered with a melee attack. Ethirindel adds +2 to his attack roll and deals an extra 5d6 points of damage with a successful avenging strike attack.

Desperate Fury (Ex): Once per day, when he is reduced to fewer than one-half his full normal hit points, or when he is fatigued or exhausted, Ethirindel can enter a state of desperate fury for 5 rounds. If he becomes frightened, panicked, or cowering, his desperate fury ends immediately. The following changes are in effect as long as he is in his desperate fury: hp increase by 13; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Grp +16; Atk +18 melee (1d8+7, *+1 elf bane longsword*) or +16 ranged (1d8+5, *+1 human bane composite longbow*); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+7, *+1 elf bane longsword*) or +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+5, *+1 human bane composite longbow*); SV Fort +11, Ref +5; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14; Climb +8, Hide +4, Jump +8, Move Silently +4.

Ethirindel can share the effect of his desperate fury with all allies within 30 feet who can see him. These allies gain the same benefits as Ethirindel for as long as his desperate fury lasts (even if they become frightened, panicked, or cowering).

Aura of Confidence (Ex): Ethirindel and his allies within 30 feet who can see him gain a +5 morale bonus on their Will saves. (This bonus is already included in Ethirindel's statistics.)

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Teamwork (Ex): Whenever Ethirindel or any ally within 30 feet who can see or hear him uses the aid another action, the bonus provided on attack rolls, AC, or skill checks improves by 2 (from +2 to +4).

Possessions: +2 elven chain, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 elf bane longsword, +1 human bane composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 2 adamantine arrows, 5 silver arrows, 10 cold iron arrows, and 23 normal arrows, *gauntlets of ogre power, circlet of persuasion.*

SCAR ENFORCER

"We have been abandoned by our fathers and mothers. We are treated as children and slaves despite our talents and ambitions. If they will not give us what we want through their own conscience, then we shall take it, by guile and the blade."

—Vakra, Bane of Elves

Scar enforcers are angry, embittered half-elves who have rejected both sides of their ancestry. They band with others of similar attitude, collectively known as the Scars, using stealth and violence to strike back at the societies that marginalize them.

BECOMING A SCAR ENFORCER

Taking levels of rogue is the easiest way to become a scar enforcer; all the entry skills are class skills for you, and your sneak attack dice from rogue levels stack with those you gain from scar enforcer levels. Bards are the natural second choice, followed by clerics (with the Trickery domain) and sorcerers. Dexterity (for sneaking) and Charisma (for bluffing) are key abilities for you.

Entry Requirements

Race: Half-elf.
Alignment: Any nongood.
Base Attack Bonus: +3.
Skills: Bluff 8 ranks, Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks.

CLASS FEATURES

While not an ideal straight-up combatant, the scar enforcer is more than a match for human and elf opponents. You work best striking from hidden positions, using your sneak attack and smite abilities to deal massive damage with a single blow.

Spells per Day: At each even-numbered level, you gain new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in a spellcasting class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a scar enforcer, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known.

Favored Enemy (Ex): As a member of this class, you gain a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humans or elves. Likewise, you gain a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against these races. See the ranger class feature, page 47 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Smite Enemy (Su): Once per day starting at 2nd level, you can deliver a powerful melee attack to a human or elf foe. You add your Charisma bonus (if any) on your attack roll and deal an extra 1 point of damage per class level. If you accidentally smite a creature that is neither an elf nor a human, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for the day.

At 5th level, you can use this ability twice per day. At 8th level, you can use this ability three times per day.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, you deal extra damage when flanking an opponent or any time the target would be denied its Dexterity bonus (except on ranged attacks, which must be point-blank to deliver the extra damage). See the rogue class feature, page 50 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Disguise Self (Sp): Starting at 4th level, you can use *disguise self* three times per day, but only to assume the appearance of a human or an elf.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): Beginning at 7th level, you can use the Hide skill in natural terrain even while being observed. See the ranger class feature, page 48 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Forgo Heritage (Ex): At 10th level, you leave behind your racial heritage. You are no longer considered an elf or a human for the purpose of beneficial or harmful effects. (You still count as a half-elf for the purpose of qualifying for this class.)

PLAYING A SCAR ENFORCER

As a scar enforcer, you have the benefit of stealth and a fearsome reputation that aids your work. Your organization, the Scars, is rightly feared for harboring assassins, leg breakers, and extortionists—and you use that fear to your advantage. Your methods employ guile and cunning, moving through the shadows with ease to land a blow on your hated foe. You can rely on your fellow scar enforcers for aid, but remember that you're still dealing with cutthroat murderers who have their own agendas. Use racial tension to your advantage by playing off stereotypical fears to sway opinions. Always remember that humans and elves have betrayed you and your people—they are not worthy of your pity or respect.

As a relatively small group, scar enforcers occasionally work together, creating effective strike teams that blend their skills with deadly success. More commonly, a scar enforcer operates on his own, mixing the needs of the Scars with his own goals in a way that benefits both. The core leaders of the Scars are based in a huge metropolis called Pal Ador (see below), but they have begun creating cells in other cities. The Scars operate numerous illegal ventures, including extortion, racketeering, and murder-for-hire. The head of your cell assigns you dirty tasks to perform, increasing in difficulty as you gain levels. You have the freedom to do whatever it takes to get the job done, as long as it does not jeopardize the Scars. Unlike an outcast champion (see the previoous section), as a scar enforcer you have little interest in working to right the social injustices that you perceive half-elves suffer. You are focused on revenge, and you know that spilling blood is more effective than any diplomatic compromise.

Combat

Scar enforcers are both brutish thugs and crafty sneaks, and work best from the shadows. They certainly have no concept of fighting fair. The key is to stay hidden until you can strike with certainty and do your best to pick off enemies one at a time. Focus your attention on your favored enemies, taking them out quickly before retreating to prepare for another assault. Use disguise and spells early on to confuse and demoralize your foes, who will often be fighting on their home territory. Never remain standing in one place for too long, especially when fighting multiple opponents.

If you're in Pal Ador, everyone has heard of the Scars, and sometimes your reputation alone can cause lesser opponents to flee, letting you deal with your primary target

Table 5–6: The Scar Enforcer **Hit Die: d8**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Favored enemy (elves and humans)	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Smite enemy 1/day	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Sneak attack +1d6	—
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	*Disguise self*	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Smite enemy 2/day	—
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Sneak attack +2d6	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Hide in plain sight	—
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Smite enemy 3/day	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Sneak attack +3d6	—
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Forgo heritage	+1 level of existing spellcasting class

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Gather Information, Hide, Knowledge (local), Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Profession, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, and Tumble.

unhindered. Use the urban terrain to your advantage, fighting from staircases, rooftops, and sewers to keep the enemy guessing, as well as giving yourself cover and several possible escape routes.

Make sure you work with allies who complement your skills in an efficient manner and who don't shy away from your methods. Flanking can be remarkably effective, especially if you and your allies share favored enemies. Still, never forget the more subtle methods of assassination. You probably don't have a large number of hit points or a particularly high AC, so strike hard and strike quickly before fleeing, letting your opponent quiver in fear of the Scars.

At 4th level, you can blend into human and elf societies with ease, thus allowing you easier access to your target. If events turn against you, your hide in plain sight ability gained at 7th level means that you can practically vanish in the face of armed guards looking for intruders.

Advancement

The Scars are very particular about who can join their ranks. First, you must be a half-elf. Second, you must prove your rancor and disgust for both humans and elves. Last, you must show both remarkable skill and a complete lack of morals. Potential recruits are watched from afar and with no interference by a high-ranking member. If you are spied upon while performing some grandiose or clever scheme against humans or elves, you may later be approached by the sponsor, who gives you one simple command: "Join or die." If you accept, you undergo a probationary period in which you must perform acts of cruelty against elves and humans. If you refuse, the sponsor disappears—and your days are then numbered, as the rest of the Scars hunt you down to ensure their secrecy.

Once admitted as a Scar, you receive your mark—a wicked cut across the chest, which is then smeared with ash and special powder to create a deep, vivid pink scar. From then on, the only way to leave the Scars is to die. You are sent on missions of increasing difficulty, murdering and stealing from those who betrayed you.

As you gain levels in the scar enforcer class, maintain high ranks in Hide, Listen, and Move Silently. Focus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive if you're more of an infiltrator, sneaking "out in the open" to worm your way closer to your foes. Magic items that benefit rogues are extremely useful, as are items that boost your Charisma or disguise your appearance.

Resources

The Scars offer their members a safe haven, information on possible targets, a cadre of lesser henchmen and informants, and a sympathetic ear when it comes to the injustices that half-elves endure. Although a relatively small organization, the Scars have built an infamous reputation that can strike fear in nobles and peasants alike.

Illus. by M. Phillippi

The Scars started out in one city, but have begun branching out, infiltrating towns that have large half-elf populations. Therefore, they may be able to provide aid outside the confines of Pal Ador. As criminals, the Scars have access to weapons, armor, illegal substances, and forbidden magic items. They have contacts throughout the city, in the form of sympathizers as well as officials they have bribed or blackmailed into submission.

SCAR ENFORCERS IN THE WORLD

If the PCs find themselves involved with the Scars, they will have to make up their minds about how they feel toward humans, elves, and half-elves. Obviously, if they belong to one of these races, the decision can be straightforward. Adventures revolving around the Scars tend to be gritty and dark, focusing on subterfuge, racial tension, betrayal and loyalty, and the more sinister aspects of city life. You can introduce the Scars in the form of a single agent, a squad of hit men sent to handle the adventurers, a powerful thieves guild, or allies in the struggle against human and elf oppressors.

The Scars work well in campaigns in which elves and humans are at odds. Because of this enmity, half-elves are looked down upon and treated as second-class citizens, pariahs, or worse. However, this climate allows a player portraying a half-elf to rise to the challenge, proving his worth in the face of adversity and discrimination.

Organization

The Scars are organized like most criminal groups, with a strong leader, a small inner circle of trusted lieutenants, and a myriad of soldiers, informants, and specialists.

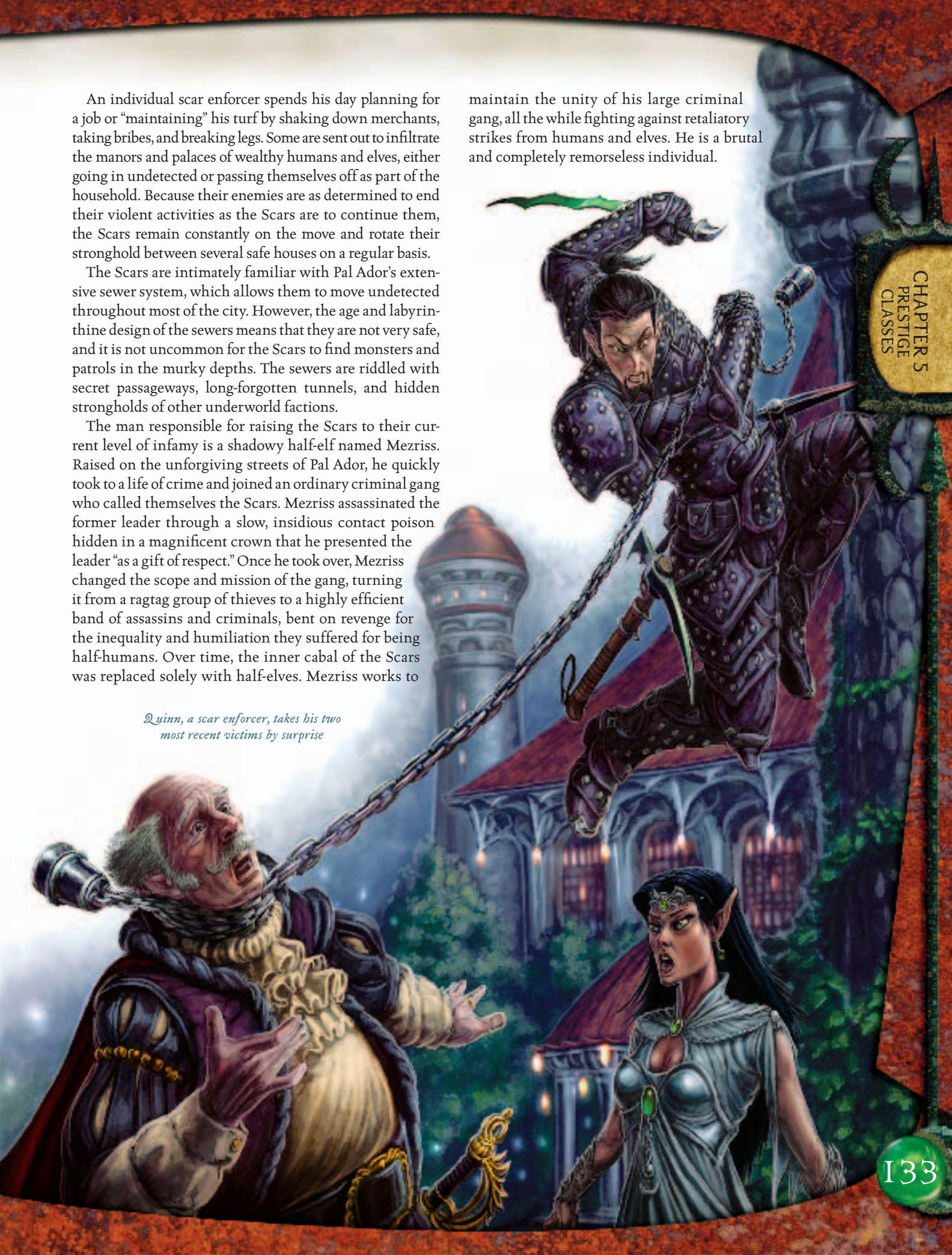
Although the Scars are rightfully known as thieves and extortionists, they truly shine as assassins for hire. Despite the fact that they despise both humans and elves, they have few qualms about taking a contract from a member of one race that results in the death of a member of the other. They are less inclined to murder a fellow half-elf, but will do so if the price is right or they believe that the subject deserves to die. This callous disregard for life is one of the reasons why many half-elves do not support the Scars' political rhetoric—they think a murderer is a murderer, regardless of race.

Each lieutenant has his own area of expertise and is responsible for finding individuals that suit the organization's needs. For example, Zola, a powerful sorcerer, locates talented spellcasters who can be brought into the group, and also eliminates rivals who pose too much of a threat or don't agree to join. At their core, however, the Scars are criminals, and everyone in the group has his own schemes and tricks to become as wealthy and powerful as possible. The Scars' leader and lieutenants take 50% of each member's earnings. With this money, the Scars purchase weapons, information, and safe houses, provide bribes to local authorities, and occasionally invest in legitimate businesses.

An individual scar enforcer spends his day planning for a job or "maintaining" his turf by shaking down merchants, taking bribes, and breaking legs. Some are sent out to infiltrate the manors and palaces of wealthy humans and elves, either going in undetected or passing themselves off as part of the household. Because their enemies are as determined to end their violent activities as the Scars are to continue them, the Scars remain constantly on the move and rotate their stronghold between several safe houses on a regular basis.

The Scars are intimately familiar with Pal Ador's extensive sewer system, which allows them to move undetected throughout most of the city. However, the age and labyrinthine design of the sewers means that they are not very safe, and it is not uncommon for the Scars to find monsters and patrols in the murky depths. The sewers are riddled with secret passageways, long-forgotten tunnels, and hidden strongholds of other underworld factions.

The man responsible for raising the Scars to their current level of infamy is a shadowy half-elf named Mezriss. Raised on the unforgiving streets of Pal Ador, he quickly took to a life of crime and joined an ordinary criminal gang who called themselves the Scars. Mezriss assassinated the former leader through a slow, insidious contact poison hidden in a magnificent crown that he presented the leader "as a gift of respect." Once he took over, Mezriss changed the scope and mission of the gang, turning it from a ragtag group of thieves to a highly efficient band of assassins and criminals, bent on revenge for the inequality and humiliation they suffered for being half-humans. Over time, the inner cabal of the Scars was replaced solely with half-elves. Mezriss works to maintain the unity of his large criminal gang, all the while fighting against retaliatory strikes from humans and elves. He is a brutal and completely remorseless individual.



Quinn, a scar enforcer, takes his two most recent victims by surprise

Although the group presents itself as a unified front, divisions exist within the Scars. Some factions have a softer opinion of either humans or elves, and are more likely to work with them than their peers. A power struggle can erupt when a faction raises the idea of eliminating either humans or elves from the city, then having half-elves live alongside the survivors. These opinions have been quashed each and every time so far, but are occurring with greater regularity. Anyone who becomes too outspoken must deal with Mezriss, which usually means a blade in the back.

NPC Reactions

The Scars are feared and reviled by most of the populace of Pal Ador, who see them as nothing more than criminals, thieves, and murderers. Most individuals have an unfriendly or hostile attitude toward a member of the Scars (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). While there are many independent criminals in Pal Ador, the Scars are the biggest and most powerful of the lot, controlling most of the illicit activity within the city walls. For this reason, they are hated but respected. Since they have their fingers in so many schemes, it's almost impossible not to deal with them in some way.

Half-elves regard the Scars in a much better light than the general populace does. Although some are sickened by the Scars' violent and immoral actions, the downtrodden half-elves of Pal Ador see them as revolutionaries and liberators. The Scars have extensive contacts among the half-elf community who can usually provide a minor bit of assistance or, at the very least, turn a blind eye to the Scars' activities.

The Scars have an impressive list of enemies, including the legitimate government of Pal Ador, many merchant groups, and rival criminal bands. Both the human and elf factions loathe them, but they also make use of the Scars against each other. Through the Scars, the human and elf governments wage a covert war, granting each government plausible deniability and saving face with the public. In addition, the Scars are actively persecuted by lawful and good religions within Pal Ador (and in other cities where the group has established cells). However, in corrupt Pal Ador, even these seemingly upstanding groups may utilize the services of the Scars in one way or another.

SCAR ENFORCER LORE

Characters with Gather Information can research the scar enforcers. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "The Scars are a criminal band of half-elf murderers, thieves, and extortionists."

DC 15: "The Scars despise both humans and elves and attack them whenever they can. They consider themselves revolutionaries in the name of half-elves everywhere."

DC 20: "The Scars hire themselves out to anyone who can afford their price, and while they hate humans and elves, they sometimes do their dirty work."

DC 30: "The Scars are thoroughly enmeshed in the city's corrupt politics. They have swayed opinions in their favor for years and have been known to eliminate officials who cause them too much trouble."

PCs trying to establish contact with the Scars for a "job" should make a DC 20 Gather Information check to discover the necessary intermediaries and protocols for contacting them. If the person is either a human or an elf, the DC is increased to 30. However, the Scars do not preclude working for or with humans and elves, but do so only to increase tensions between those two races and at a markedly increased price.

SCAR ENFORCERS IN THE GAME

As described above, the Scars are found mainly in one city. However, you can easily introduce them into a large town of your own. As a secret criminal group, it's easy to assume that they have been there for a long time, keeping their activities well hidden from the general populace.

The prestige class appeals to players who enjoy skullduggery, murky morality, and grim plotlines. The scar enforcer is a combination of fierce combatant, sneaky spy, and social engineer who specializes in threats and intimidation. When you design a campaign that involves the Scars, make sure you include opportunities for them to use their skills and reputation to dazzle the locals. Remember to play up the racial tension and simmering anger within the city (or area).

Adaptation

Scar enforcers were designed with the city of Pal Ador in mind—a place where humans and elves live in an unsteady truce with deep suspicions toward each other. You could place the Scars in any city within your campaign or have them act as a roving band of mercenaries who fight for the rights of half-elves. Alternatively, the Scars could simply be part of the local thieves guild or assassins guild, with an additional political motivation that sets them apart.

Encounters

If the PCs visit Pal Ador, they will eventually encounter the Scars, even in a mundane situation such as dealing with a merchant who owes them money. If they become involved in the convoluted politics of the city, they may become targets of the Scars—for recruitment, harassment, or assassination.

EL 8: Quinn, a scar enforcer, and two half-elf bravos (see Sample Half-Elf NPCs, page 183) begin shadowing and questioning the adventurers, convinced they are on a mission for either the human or elf government.

Quinn: Male half-elf bard 5/scar enforcer 2; CR 7: Medium humanoid (elf); HD 5d6–5 plus 2d8–2; hp 22; Init

+2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk or Full Atk+7 melee (1d6+1, masterwork rapier) or +7 melee (1d3+1, masterwork whip); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (15 ft. with masterwork whip); SA favored enemy elf +2, favored enemy human +2, smite enemy 1/day, spells; SQ bardic knowledge +5, bardic music 5/day (countersong, *fascinate,* inspire competence, inspire courage +1), half-elf traits, low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +0; Ref +6; Will +8 (+10 against enchantments); Str 12, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Gather Information +7, Hide +5, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Perform (oratory) +11, Search +4, Sense Motive +2, Spot +5, Tumble +5; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Persuasive, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Favored Enemy (Ex): Quinn gains a +2 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against elves or humans. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage rolls.

Smite Enemy (Su): Once per day, Quinn can attempt to smite a human or elf foe with one normal melee attack. He adds +3 to his attack roll and deals an extra 2 points of damage.

Bardic Music: Use bardic music five times per day. See the bard class feature, page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Countersong (Su): Use music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound.

Fascinate (Sp): Use music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with him.

Inspire Competence (Su): Use music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task.

Inspire Courage (Su): Use music or poetics to bolster his allies against fear and improve their combat abilities.

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Bard Spells Known (3/4/3 per day; caster level 6th): 0—*dancing lights, daze* (DC 13), *detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 13), *lullaby* (DC 13), *mending*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 14), *hypnotism* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 14), *ventriloquism* (DC 14); 2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 15), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 15).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, masterwork whip, masterwork chain shirt, *ring of protection +1, hat of disguise, elixir of hiding, elixir of sneaking,* 2 *potions of cure light wounds, potion of eagle's splendor.*

EL 14: Vakra, who styles herself Bane of Elves, has been hired by a wealthy and powerful human noble to assassinate an elf member of the party that the noble believes has slighted his honor.

Vakra: Male half-elf ranger 6/rogue 1/scar enforcer 7; CR 14: Medium humanoid (elf); HD 1d6+1 plus 13d8+13; hp 78; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +11; Grp +14; Atk +16 melee (1d6+4/×4, *+1 elf bane heavy pick*) or +16 ranged (1d8+4, *+1 composite shortbow*); Full Atk +16/+11/+6 melee (1d6+4×4, *+1 elf bane heavy pick*) or +14/+9/+4 melee (1d6+4/×4, *+1 elf bane heavy pick*) and +14/+9 melee (1d4+2/×4, *+1 human bane light pick*) or +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+4, *+1 composite shortbow*); SA favored enemy elves +6, favored enemy humans +4, smite enemy 2/day, sneak attack +3d6, spells; SQ animal companion (viper), animal companion benefits, *disguise self,* half-elf traits, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, substitution levels, trapfinding, wild empathy +7 (+3 magical beasts); AL NE; SV Fort +8; Ref +13; Will +8 (+10 against enchantments); Str 16, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Bluff +7, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +6, Disguise –1 (+1 acting), Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +7, Hide +26, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +9, Move Silently +21, Ride +6, Search +8, Spot +19, Survival +10 (+12 following tracks), Use Rope +7; Endurance[B], Improved Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Urban Tracking[B], Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Weapon Focus (light pick).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Favored Enemy (Ex): Vakra gains a +6 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against elves. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage rolls.

Against humans, he gains a +4 bonus on these skill checks and on weapon damage rolls.

Smite Enemy (Su): Twice per day, Vakra can attempt to smite a human or elf foe with one normal melee attack. He deals an extra 7 points of damage.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Vakra does an extra 3d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Vakra may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Animal Companion (Ex): Vakra has a medium viper named Virius as an animal companion. The companion's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Animal Companion Benefits: Vakra and Virius enjoy the link and share spells special qualities.

Link (Ex): Vakra can handle Virius as a free action. He also gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding Virius.

Share Spells (Ex): Vakra may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his animal companion if the latter is

within 5 feet at the time. Vakra may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on his animal companion.

Disguise Self (Sp): Vakra can use *disguise self* three times per day, but only to assume the appearance of a human or elf.

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): Hide in natural terrain even while being observed.

Substitution Levels: Half-elf ranger 1st, half-elf ranger 4th. See page 158.

Trapfinding (Ex): Vakra can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Virius, Viper Animal Companion: CR —; Medium magical beast; HD 4d8; hp 18; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk or Full Atk +7 melee (1d4–1 plus poison); SA poison; SQ evasion, link, scent, share spells; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +4; Ref +8; Will +2; Str 9, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +13, Listen +8, Spot +11, Swim +7; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): Virius has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con (DC 12 Fort save).

Evasion (Ex): If Virius is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Ranger Spells Prepared (caster level 4th): 1st—*detect secret doors, message.*

Possessions: *+2 studded leather armor,+1 elf bane heavy pick, +1 human bane light pick, +1 composite shortbow* (+3 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *gloves of Dexterity +2, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +2, quiver of Ehlonna, cloak of elvenkind, eyes of the eagle, potion of barkskin* +3, 3 *potions of cure light wounds, potion of hide from animals, potion of jump.*

THE CITY OF PAL ADOR

Pal Ador (Metropolis): Nonstandard; NE; 3,000 gp; Assets 600,000 gp; Population 30,000 (37% human, 20% elf, 18% half-elf, 10% halfling, 7% gnome, 5% dwarf, 3% half-orc).

Pal Ador is an enormous city bisected by a large, turgid river. It is an ancient and grand city that has fallen to decadence, declining steadily over the past centuries. At the moment, Pal Ador is a divided city, both figuratively and literally. Its two largest races, humans and elves, live in an unsteady accord, with the river acting as a natural border that barely keeps the peace.

Pal Ador is situated on a large open plain dotted with trees—the river on which it sits is the only notable feature. Although in its decline, Pal Ador is filled with grand, towering buildings, expansive manors, and a bustling merchant's district. The architecture on the elf side of town is markedly different from the human side, reflecting its inhabitants' unique style. Regardless of their location, all buildings show signs of slow decay and the place exudes a genteel rot. Pal Ador is noted for its huge sewer system, built to last for centuries. These sewers have become the territory of all manner of scum, criminals, and dissidents.

Pal Ador was created long ago as a settlement that bordered human and elf territories. The two races lived in harmony, and Pal Ador quickly became a trading and cultural center. The two nations established embassies five hundred years ago, and ideas and good will flourished. This all came to an end two hundred years later when the political foundation on which the city was built began to crack. Over time, divisions between the city's elves and humans grew. The two nations that were once allies and partners came to blows, and portions of Pal Ador were sacked several times by both sides.

After almost seventy-five years of war, a truce was finally established, and Pal Ador was once again used as a neutral ground for humans and elves. Trade started up again, and buildings were repaired, but attitudes were never again the same. The two races pulled back on opposite sides of the river, maintaining their own governments as well as polite, if icy, relations with each other. The war also corrupted the morals and ethics of its rulers and inhabitants—if you weren't on the take, you were a victim to be exploited. Finally having regained its status as a trading city, Pal Ador is still a dangerous place to live, and violence in the streets is a common occurrence. Nobles rarely leave the safety of their homes, and when they do, they travel under heavy guard.

After centuries of relative peace early in its history, Pal Ador featured a relatively large half-elf population. In harmonious times, half-elves were accorded the same rights and respect as any citizen. Today, however, they are viewed with suspicion and distaste—many live no better than slaves. Indeed, although slavery is technically illegal on both sides of the river, an underground slave trade thrives (and is ignored by authorities, as long the slave owner is not enslaving his own race). Half-elves try to better their lives, but between the corruption of the government and the prejudice of both humans and elves, they have had little success. Humans, elves, and half-elves who visit the city must quickly decide which side they are on—neutrality is not tolerated.

Both sides of the town are ruled by councils, heavily influenced by the local merchant's guild and criminal elements. Each faction has a sizable army relative to the population of the city, and nobles maintain a larger than average coterie of bodyguards, treating their homes as small city-states within the metropolis.

SHADOW SENTINEL

"In the darkest hour, in the darkest place, I guard the ramparts and make sure no one threatens our homeland."

—Blackpennant Thautar, illumian shadow sentinel

Shadow sentinels are elite illumian warriors who protect their people from githyanki raiders, demonic invasions, and hordes of barely imaginable monsters from the Plane of Shadow. They have learned to imbue their weapons with shadowstuff itself, causing them to flow like quicksilver, then strike as the hardest steel.

BECOMING A SHADOW SENTINEL

The most straightforward path to sentinelhood is to attain 5th level as a fighter and then convince the sentinel leaders in Elirhondas that you have what it takes to defend illumian lands against monstrous invasion. The entry requirements for the prestige class are broad enough that illumians from almost any class can eventually qualify. Because illumians often multiclass anyway, it's not unheard of for spellcasters to join the ranks of the sentinels, even though the prestige class doesn't offer advanced spellcasting power.

Entry Requirements

Race: Illumian
Base Attack Bonus: +5.
Skills: Weapon Focus (any slashing weapon).
Special: Must pass combat examination from sentinel leaders.

Table 5–7: The Shadow Sentinel **Hit Die: d10**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Shadow Points
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	*Umbral blade +1*, morphic blade (type), shadowstrike	1
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Shadowbane	3
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Shadowsharp	5
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	*Umbral blade +2*	7
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Morphic blade (material)	9
6th	+6	+5	+5	+2	*Umbral blade +3*	11
7th	+7	+5	+5	+2	Shadow drain	13
8th	+8	+6	+6	+2	*Umbral blade +4*	15
9th	+9	+6	+6	+3	Morphic blade (alignment)	17
10th	+10	+7	+7	+3	*Umbral blade +5*	19

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Climb, Craft, Intimidate, Jump, Listen, Ride, Spot, and Swim.

CLASS FEATURES

The shadow sentinel's class features focus almost entirely on wielding the *umbral blade* given to each new member.

Shadow Points (Su): Upon entering this class, you gain a reservoir of shadow essence that you can draw upon to power your class features. This reserve increases in size as you advance in level; Table 5–7 indicates your daily limit of shadow energy. It takes 8 hours of rest to restore your shadow points to their maximum.

Spending shadow points is a swift action.

Umbral Blade (Su): As a new member of the class, you receive an *umbral blade* in an elaborate ceremony conducted in the Tombs of the Brave in Elirhondas. In the hands of anyone not trained in its use, an *umbral blade* is merely a weapon with a +1 enhancement bonus made of some unusually dark, oily metal. An *umbral blade* may be any kind of slashing melee weapon, from a dagger to a longsword to a greataxe; each new shadow sentinel can choose the specific weapon. You can infuse the *umbral blade* with the power of shadow itself, unlocking greater powers. Your *umbral blade* acts as a lens, focusing your power to accomplish feats no other weapon can match.

In time, your *umbral blade* grows in power as you become more familiar with it. At 4th level, your *umbral blade* gains a +2 enhancement bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls. The enhancement bonus rises to +3 at 6th level, +4 at 8th level, and +5 at 10th level. This enhancement bonus only applies when you wield it; for any other character it is only a *+1 weapon*.

You can't add other special properties or powers to your *umbral blade*.

You can have only one *umbral blade* at a time. If you lose your *umbral blade*, you can transform any slashing melee weapon that has at least a +1 enhancement bonus into a new *umbral blade* (with all the appropriate powers for your class level) by meditating and infusing the blade with the power of shadow. Doing this costs 100 XP, takes 24 hours, and uses up all your shadow points for that day.

Morphic Blade (Su): Even as a beginning shadow sentinel, you have rudimentary control over your *umbral blade*. You can spend 1 shadow point to change the dimensions of your weapon, turning it into a slashing melee weapon of your choice (sized appropriately for you). This change lasts for 24 hours or until you change the *umbral blade*'s dimensions again, whichever comes first.

At 5th level, you can spend 3 shadow points to allow your *umbral blade* to mimic a special material (such as adamantine, silver, or cold iron). This effect lasts for 1 minute per class level. Your *umbral blade* retains the normal hardness and hit points for a weapon of its type.

At 9th level, you can spend 5 shadow points to allow your *umbral blade* to mimic a specific alignment (chaos, evil, good, or law) for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. This effect lasts for 1 minute per class level. If the weapon has a different alignment (such as granted by your race or subtype), the new one suppresses the original alignment for the duration of the effect.

Shadowstrike (Su): You can spend 1 shadow point to momentarily turn your *umbral blade* into fluid shadowstuff, enabling you to pierce an opponent's defenses. Your next attack with your *umbral blade* (if made before the start of

your next turn) is treated as a touch attack. The attack even ignores any AC bonus from cover (except total cover) that the target may have, since the blade's fluid nature allows it to reach around barriers.

Shadowbane (Su): At 2nd level and higher, you can spend 1 shadow point to grant your *umbral blade* the equivalent of the bane special ability against evil outsiders and against creatures native to the Plane of Shadow. The effect lasts for 1 round per class level.

Shadowsharp (Su): At 3rd level and higher, you can spend 1 shadow point to double the threat range of your *umbral blade*. This benefit is the equivalent of the keen special ability. The effect lasts for 1 minute per class level.

Shadow Drain (Su): At 7th level and higher, you can spend 1 or more shadow points when striking a living creature with your *umbral blade*. The attack permanently drains 1 point of Strength from the target per shadow point spent. You can spend a maximum number of shadow points per round on this ability equal to one-half your class level.

PLAYING A SHADOW SENTINEL

As a shadow sentinel, you are among the best of the best, entrusted with the guardianship of the illumian race. Your *umbral blade* marks you as a paragon of the illumian race and the sworn enemy of anyone who threatens it.

While most shadow sentinels live in a garrison in Elirhondas, ready to defend the city at a moment's notice, you might have a greater degree of freedom to travel and adventure. Some shadow sentinels are placed on inactive reserve, free to return to their cabals or live independent lives until they receive a magical summons to aid in the defense of Elirhondas. The Black Table that directs the affairs of Elirhondas sometimes sends shadow sentinels on long-term missions that take them far beyond the ramparts of the shadow city. Shadow sentinels can resign their commissions at any time, although few do. Even after resigning from the organization, a sentinel retain their *umbral blades* and can still advance in the class because they understand how to practice and hone their mastery over shadow.

Combat

Shadow sentinels tend to be straightforward, efficient opponents in melee, cutting down their enemies as quickly as possible. Against opponents who aren't familiar with your *umbral blade*, you can gain a significant advantage by fighting conventionally for a few rounds, then surprising your enemy with an attack that ignores his armor and shield.

When you reach the higher levels of the prestige class, you'll quickly become adept at figuring out how best to bypass a monster's magical defenses, using the relevant Knowledge skill to learn more about your enemy. Once you understand the limits of a foe's damage reduction and armor, you can use the morphic blade and shadowsharp class features to make every cut of your *umbral blade* count.

Advancement

Becoming a shadow sentinel is no easy task. You must travel to Elirhondas, first obtaining permission from your cabal to do so. Then you must succeed in a series of duels, physical fitness tests, and grueling contests devised by the senior leaders of the shadow sentinels. Only one in ten illumians passes the necessary exams. You are taught meditative techniques that enable you to store shadow energy within yourself, followed by training in specific combat moves that compliment your unique weapon. After a few months of training, you're ready to receive your *umbral blade* and call yourself a shadow sentinel.

Ongoing training is mostly a matter of nurturing the shadow energy within you and learning to absorb and channel more and more of it. Shadow sentinels can accomplish much of this training on their own—it's more a matter of practice and repetition than guided instruction.

Your prowess as a shadow sentinel is tied directly to the effectiveness of your *umbral blade*. Accordingly, choose feats that maximize your ability to wield that weapon effectively (such as Improved Disarm and feats with Power Attack as a prerequisite) and feats that keep you alive long enough to cut at your foes (such as Combat Expertise and feats with Dodge as a prerequisite).

Resources

You are given an *umbral blade* when you first become a shadow sentinel, but it's your responsibility to replace it if it's lost or sundered. Shadow sentinels provide their own armor, although in most cases their cabals back on the Material Plane made it for them.

Shadow sentinels on active duty count on illumian spellcasters to whisk them into combat, so they tend to armor themselves as heavily as possible. If you're adventuring beyond Elirhondas, you'll want to balance the protective benefit of heavy armor and shield with the versatility of faster movement—and the extra damage from a two-handed weapon.

SHADOW SENTINELS IN THE WORLD

The shadow sentinel prestige class invests an illumian PC in the race's survival, immersing the PC in illumian battles and intrigues. Because the class is mechanically straightforward, it's a particularly good class for a player who wants to play a mysterious race such as the illumians without the difficulty of complicated multiclassing or spellcasting.

Organization

All shadow sentinels call the garrison at Elirhondas their home base, because illumians there developed the shadow-fighting techniques that became the organization's hallmark.

The shadow sentinels function as a directorate within the city. Their leader, General Sheokru, takes orders only

from the Black Table in Elirhondas. In practice, the Black Table leaves the shadow sentinels to their own devices, occasionally asking for a few capable sentinels to perform missions away from the shadow city.

The sentinels conduct themselves like a small army, with a corps of officers giving orders to squads, each of which has a sergeant to handle specific, moment-by-moment tactics. Advancement through the ranks can be quite rapid. The shadow sentinels fight often enough that battlefield promotions are common.

Shadow sentinels spend much of their time drilling or teaching the rudiments of melee combat to the city's less elite guards. But at least once a month, a raiding force or rampaging monster poses a threat to Elirhondas, and the shadow sentinels mobilize in response.

The shadow sentinel garrison is home to dozens of illumians who assist the sentinels but are not sentinels themselves, including armorers, weaponsmiths, and arcane and divine spellcasters. The founder of the shadow sentinels, Duskwatcher Vlaukea, lives in the garrison. Although more than a century old, he still advises senior sentinel officers on matters of training—he did invent the shadow sentinel technique, after all.

NPC Reactions

Almost every illumian has heard of the shadow sentinels and their courage in the defense of Elirhondas and illumians everywhere, so most illumians have an initial attitude of friendly toward a shadow sentinel bearing an *umbral blade* (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). Githyanki are likewise aware of the shadow sentinels and greet them with anger or fear. Their initial attitude is uniformly hostile. Few other creatures have ever heard of Elirhondas or the shadow sentinels, so the sentinels' reputation doesn't affect most NPCs' attitudes.

SHADOW SENTINEL LORE

Characters with Knowledge (arcana) can research the shadow sentinels to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "The shadow sentinels are elite illumian soldiers who wield black swords."

DC 15: "Shadow sentinels defend the illumian city of Elirhondas on the Plane of Shadow, and they've kept it safe for decades, mostly against githyanki attacks."

DC 20: "The black swords the sentinels carry are called *umbral blades*. Shadow sentinels can make an *umbral blade* shift and grow by channeling shadow through it."

DC 30: "General Sheokru leads the shadow sentinels, and he can do whatever he wants with his troops as long as Elirhondas stays safe."

SHADOW SENTINELS IN THE GAME

Illumian characters have heard of shadow sentinels from childhood—they're famous protectors of the race. Other characters meet shadow sentinels only if they visit Elirhondas or run afoul of powerful illumian interests.

If you have a shadow sentinel PC at your gaming table, make sure that the PC doesn't feel chained to Elirhondas and can freely leave to adventure—even if the tasks don't have anything to do with the illumian race. An occasional reminder of the organization's importance is sufficient.

Conversely, the shadow sentinels are a useful way to start an adventure. Because they're elite troops and close to illumian leaders,

A shadow sentinel raises her umbral blade, poised to strike in an instant

Illus. by D. Hudnut

they are sent on missions of great importance. Elirhondas itself can make a great headquarters for a group of high-level PCs. Because it's on the Plane of Shadow, it's easy to reach from anywhere, yet mysterious and insulated from the strife of the Material Plane.

Adaptation

As written, the shadow sentinels are strictly designed for illumians, and they're tied tightly to that race's culture. The mechanics of the class would be appropriate for any race or group with a connection to the Plane of Shadow, so you could use shadow sentinels even in a campaign that doesn't feature illumians.

Encounters

If the PCs wind up fighting shadow sentinels, you'll want to give some thought ahead of time to how the sentinels will spend their shadow points during the battle. Shadow sentinel fights are more fun if they last long enough for the sentinels to spend their points and use all their tricks with their *umbral blades*.

EL 9: The characters encounter a pair of shadow sentinel guards while on an adventure that seems totally unrelated to the illumian race. Unfortunately, the PCs' patron has become enmeshed in illumian politics, and now the characters have been marked as enemies of Elirhondas.

Shadow Sentinel Guard: Male or female illumian fighter 5/shadow sentinel 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+14; hp 54; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (2d6+7/19–20, *+1 umbral blade*) or +9 ranged (1d8+3/×3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+7/19–20, *+1 umbral blade*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8+3/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA morphic blade, 3 shadow points, shadowbane, shadowstrike, *umbral blade*; SQ glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, morphic blade, power sigils, shadow familiarity; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Listen +5, Spot +10; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Languages: Common, Illumian.

Morphic Blade (Su): A guard can spend 1 shadow point to change her *umbral blade* into any other Medium slashing weapon.

Shadow Points (Su): A guard has 3 shadow points to spend on her shadow sentinel class features.

Shadowbane (Su): A guard can spend 1 shadow point to give her *umbral blade* the bane special ability against evil outsiders and against creatures native to the Plane of Shadow for 2 rounds.

Shadowstrike (Su): By spending 1 shadow point, a guard can render her *umbral blade* fluid enough to ignore AC bonuses from cover (except total cover) and strike as a touch attack. The effect lasts until the guard's next attack.

Umbral Blade: A guard's *umbral blade* is effectively a *+1 greatsword*. A guard who loses her blade can turn any slashing weapon with at least a +1 enhancement bonus into a new *umbral blade* by spending 100 XP and 24 hours in meditation.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Illumians interact strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): A guard's combination of power sigils provides her with the *aeshuur* illumian word. When a guard deals damage to a target with critical hit, she gains a +2 dodge bonus to her AC against that target until the beginning of her next turn.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit a guard's head provide illumination equal to a candle. She can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or her illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): A guard's *aesh* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Strength checks and all Strength-based skill checks (included). A guard's *uur* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Dexterity checks and all Dexterity-based skill checks (included).

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): A guard has a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the shadow descriptor.

Possessions: +2 full plate, umbral blade, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *eyes of the eagle, potion of cure moderate wounds.*

EL 13: A detachment of four illumians—two shadow sentinel guards (see above), a battle sorcerer (see page 191), and a shadow sentinel officer—has been dispatched to retrieve an item of great importance to the rulers of Elirhondas. Coincidentally, this same item was part of a treasure hoard discovered by the PCs, which they are currently bringing back to their home city to sell. The illumians hit first and ask questions later.

Shadow Sentinel Officer: Male illumian fighter 5/shadow sentinel 7; CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 12d10+24; hp 94; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +12; Grp +18; Atk +22 melee (1d10+11/17–20, *umbral blade*); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (1d10+11/17–20, *umbral blade*); SA morphic blade, shadow drain, 13 shadow points, shadowbane, shadowsharp, shadowstrike, *umbral blade*; SQ glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils, shadow familiarity; AL LN; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 22, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +17, Intimidate +15, Jump +17; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Disarm, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Languages: Common, Illumian, Draconic.

Morphic Blade (Su): The officer can spend 1 shadow point to change his *umbral blade* into any other Medium slashing weapon for 24 hours, or 3 shadow points to have the *umbral blade* mimic a special material (such as adamantine, silver, or cold iron) for 7 minutes.

Shadow Drain (Su): For every shadow point the officer spends (to a maximum of 3 shadow points per round), his *umbral blade* drains 1 point of Strength from a living creature struck in melee.

Shadow Points (Su): The officer has 13 shadow points to spend on his shadow sentinel class features.

Shadowbane (Su): The officer can spend 1 shadow point to give his *umbral blade* the bane special ability against evil outsiders and against creatures native to the Plane of Shadow for 7 rounds.

Shadowsharp (Su): The officer can spend 1 shadow point to give his *umbral blade* the keen special ability for 7 minutes.

Shadowstrike (Su): By spending 1 shadow point, the officer can render his *umbral blade* fluid enough to ignore AC bonuses from cover (except total cover) and strike as a touch attack. The effect lasts until the officer's next attack.

Umbral Blade: The officer's *umbral blade* is effectively a *+3 bastard sword*. An officer who loses his *umbral blade* can turn any slashing weapon with at least a +1 enhancement bonus into a new *umbral blade* by spending 100 XP and 24 hours in meditation.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Illumians interact strangely with symbol-based spells. See page 53 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): The officer's combination of power sigils provides him with the *aeshuur* illumian word. When the officer deals damage to a target with critical hit, he gains a +2 dodge bonus to his AC against that target until the beginning of his next turn.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit the officer's head provide illumination equal to a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): The officer's *aesh* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Strength checks and all Strength-based skill checks (included). The officer's *uur* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Dexterity checks and all Dexterity-based skill checks (included).

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): The officer has a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the shadow descriptor.

Possessions: +2 spiked full plate, +2 heavy steel shield, umbral blade, belt of giant strength +4, potion of protection from energy (cold), potion of cure serious wounds.

URBAN SOUL

"The city's streets are my arteries, and its buildings my bones. Threaten my city, and you threaten me."

—Parethian, urban soul of Rel Astra

Urban souls are the chosen champions of the deity Urbanus (described in Chapter 1), charged with protecting city denizens from external dangers such as marauding monsters, and from subtler threats to the city such as crime and urban unrest.

BECOMING AN URBAN SOUL

Bards and rogues have the easiest path into this prestige class, although rogues have to buy Knowledge (architecture and engineering) as a cross-class skill. Wizards can enter the class with relative ease, but the lack of spellcasting advancement makes it unlikely that they'll be interested.

Entry Requirements

Race: Human.
Skills: Knowledge (local) 10 ranks, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) 5 ranks, Gather Information 5 ranks.
Special: Blessing from the temple of Urbanus.

Table 5–8: The Urban Soul — **Hit Die: d8**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	City ramparts 1/day, urban sustenance
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Citybred senses +2
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	*Meld into city*
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	*See the city*
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	City ramparts 2/day
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Citybred senses +4, urban skill mastery
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	*Hear the city* 1/day
8th	+6	+6	+6	+2	Mob violence
9th	+6	+6	+6	+3	City ramparts 3/day
10th	+7	+7	+7	+3	Citybred senses +6, *hear the city* 2/day, *citywalk*

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (local), Listen, Move Silently, Search, Speak Language, Spot, and Tumble.

CLASS FEATURES

The urban soul's class features focus on survival in cities and large communities. Many of your powers rely on your being within the boundary of a city. For the purpose of your class features, the term "city" applies to any community with more than 5,000 inhabitants (that is, at least as large as a small city).

City Ramparts (Ex): Once per day, you can call upon the combined might of a community's citizens to fortify yourself in body and mind. Doing this grants you a +4

bonus to Constitution and a +2 bonus on Will saves, and it also toughens your skin, giving you damage reduction 5/adamantine. This effect lasts for at least 1 round per point of (adjusted) Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round). If you are within a city, the duration increases as noted below:

Small city	(3 + Con modifier) rounds
Large city	(5 + Con modifier) rounds
Metropolis or larger	(10 + Con modifier) rounds

You can use this ability twice per day at 5th level and three times per day at 9th level.

Urban Sustenance (Ex): You rely on the presence of a city for your physical needs, and you suffer when you travel beyond such areas. While within a city, you need not eat, drink, or sleep, and you heal at twice the normal rate. If you cast spells, you must still rest for the normal amount of time needed to regain spells.

However, you cannot heal naturally at all outside a city, and you eventually weaken if kept away from an urban environment. If you remain outside a city for 24 hours, you must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage and 1 point of Constitution damage. Each day after the first that you remain outside a city, the save DC increases by +1.

Citybred Senses (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, you gain a +2 insight bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks made within a city.

At 6th level, your bonus improves to +4, and at 10th level, it improves to +6.

Meld Into City (Sp): Beginning at 3rd level, you can meld your body and possessions into the wall of a building, into the street, or into any other stone structure that is part of a city. This ability otherwise functions like *meld into stone,* usable at will, with your urban soul level as the caster level.

See the City (Sp): At 4th level and higher, you can create a magical sensor (as *clairaudience/clairvoyance,* except that only sight is allowed) three times per day, using your urban soul level as the caster level. The sensor is not limited by the *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell's range; you can see anyplace within the city you're in.

Urban Skill Mastery (Ex): By 6th level, you have become so familiar with moving through cities that you can do so with extraordinary ease. While in a city, you can take 10 on any of the following skill checks even when under stress: Balance, Climb, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble.

Hear the City (Sp): At 7th level and higher, you can speak with a building, street, or other part of a city once per day. This ability is the equivalent of a *stone tell* spell (using your urban soul level as the caster level), except that it works on any part of a city.

You can use this ability twice per day at 10th level.

Mob Violence (Su): At 8th level, you become able to channel the anger of a restive populace into fury you unleash on your enemies. You can activate the mob violence class feature for a number of rounds per day equal to your class level, split up as you like. Activating or deactivating this ability is a free action. While you have this class feature active, your attacks deal extra damage as noted below.

Small city	1d6 points of damage
Large city	2d6 points of damage
Metropolis or larger	3d6 points of damage

Citywalk (Sp): At 10th level, you can magically travel between cities at will. This ability functions much like *transport via plants,* except that you must begin the journey within a city, and you end the journey on the outskirts of a specified city on the same plane.

You cannot specify a particular endpoint (such as the Laughing Manticore Tavern in Rel Astra or the Mayor's Reception Hall in Greyhawk). The ability deposits you in a safe location determined by the DM (assuming one exists) just outside the destination city. If the specified city doesn't exist, or if no safe location outside the city exists, the ability fails.

You must concentrate for a specific period of time to activate this ability. The size of the destination city determines how long the concentration must last, as noted below. If your concentration is interrupted during this time, you must start again.

Small city	1 hour
Large city	10 minutes
Metropolis or larger	1 minute

CITY-BONDED SUBSTITUTION LEVEL

Urban souls who desire a deep connection to a specific city may take this substitution level instead of the 10th level of the urban soul prestige class. For more information on substitution levels, see Chapter 6.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The city-bonded substitution level grants the class skills of the urban soul prestige class plus Diplomacy and Sense Motive.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are features of the city-bonded substitution level. These three substitution benefits replace the 10th-level urban soul's *citywalk* ability; the character still receives the benefits of the citybred senses and *hear the city* class features.

City Bond (Su): This class feature offers greater power within your city in exchange for the flexibility to travel. As long as you remain within the boundaries of your chosen city, you do not age. (If you leave the city, you age normally.) Your class features that depend on your being inside a city function only when you're within the boundaries of your chosen city.

This bond enables you to draw more strongly on the collective strength of the city, even if it's not the largest urban environment. For the purposes of your class features, your chosen city is considered a metropolis, regardless of its actual size. If your city's population drops below 5,000 inhabitants, you lose access to your class features until the population grows again.

Intracity Teleport (Sp): You can magically travel between any two points within your city at will. This class feature functions like the *greater teleport* spell, except that it requires a full-round action, and both the origin and destination must be within your city.

Urban Renewal (Sp): As a city-bonded urban soul, the cityscape is yours to command. You gain access to the following spell-like abilities: *disintegrate* (objects only), *stone shape,* and *wall of stone.* You can use these abilities a total of five times per day, split up however you choose (two *disintegrates* and three *walls of stone*, for example). Your caster level is equal to your urban soul level.

Parethian, urban soul of the city of Rel Astra

Table 5–9: The City-Bonded Urban Soul **Hit Die: d8**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
10th	+7	+7	+7	+3	Citybred senses +6, *hear the city* 2/day, city bond, *intracity teleport, urban renewal*

PLAYING AN URBAN SOUL

The city streets are your home turf, and you're tougher, more mobile, and more perceptive there. Because your power is tied to the urban environment, you're loath to leave it without a reason—but you find the city holds a thousand adventures more thrilling than those found in any far-off dungeon.

Urban souls have the blessing of Urbanus, deity of cities, but you stand at arm's length from the deity's clergy. You can count on assistance and advice from the temples of Urbanus, but you're not under their command, nor are they under yours. You've been chosen by Urbanus for purposes of his own, and Urbanus doesn't always share his reasons with either urban souls or his clerics.

Combat

You'll face an important decision in every battle: Is this battle dangerous enough to warrant using the city ramparts class feature? You're much better protected with your city ramparts ability active, but frequent use might leave you bereft of protection when you need it most.

You'll be able to manage your city ramparts ability more efficiently if you're able to learn about your foes beforehand. Stealth skills and the *see the city* and *hear the city* class features help you scout your enemies and avoid unpleasant surprises in combat.

When you gain the mob violence class feature at 8th level, you'll have another time-limited advantage. Your mob violence ability will be more effective if you manage it carefully as well.

Illus. by E. Cox

Advancement

New urban souls are recruited by the will of Urbanus himself. He appears to a prospective urban soul in a dream, commanding a visit to the deity's temple the next day. The temple's high priest receives a similar prophetic dream and prepares various rites to welcome and bless the new urban soul.

As you gain levels in the prestige class, you can operate in conjunction with the clerics of Urbanus or as an independent agent. Urban souls don't necessarily share the neutral good alignment of Urbanus, but they have an alignment conducive to the city they're in. If your alignment varies greatly from neutral good, it might place a strain on your relationship with the church of Urbanus.

Once you're in the urban soul prestige class, let the nature of the cities you patrol guide your feat and skill choices. If your city is under siege or beset by enemies, concentrate on combat-related feats and skills such as Balance, Climb, Jump, and Tumble that improve your maneuverability in a fight. If you're investigating hidden corruption within the city, take skills such as Gather Information and Intimidate.

Resources

Urban souls can usually count on free or inexpensive healing at temples of Urbanus, subject to their available resources. The temple is also a good source for information, especially if an urban soul is visiting a city for the first time. Many urban souls travel from city to city, asking at each temple in turn about what threats need to be eliminated.

URBAN SOULS IN THE WORLD

The urban soul prestige class is a natural for campaigns that feature frequent forays into urban environments. Urban souls also make good city guides or patrons. An urban soul makes an effective antagonist if the PCs come to a city with mayhem (or a subtler plot) in mind.

Organization

Urban souls have an organizational connection to the church of Urbanus, but they aren't part of the religious hierarchy and answer to none but the deity. A few urban souls adopt a single city and devote themselves utterly to its welfare, while others wander from city to city, sampling their splendors.

Beyond seeing to the welfare of the city they inhabit, few urban souls have a larger agenda—but keeping tabs on the threats to an entire metropolis can be a full-time job. Over the course of a week, a typical urban soul might contend with a war between two rival thieves guilds, a trading company smuggling dangerous poisons into the city, and an infestation of wererats in the city sewers. When the city is safe, an urban soul can relax and enjoy the diversions that urban life offers.

Some urban souls earn a degree of fame (or at least notoriety) among the citizens of a city. Parethian of Rel Astra is well known among the city's residents, for example, even if tales about him are as much folklore as fact. More often, an urban soul keeps a low profile, blending in among both high society and low. Roughly half of all urban souls are nomadic, moving city from city as the mood strikes them.

Urban souls can wander as they like until they reach 10th level. At that point, they can remain devoted to city life in general, in which case they attain 10th level normally. But if they choose to bond themselves with a single city, they instead take the substitution level described above. Once an urban soul has established such a bond, it cannot be broken unless the urban soul dies or the city is razed to the ground.

Most urban souls accede to subtle pressure to conform to the city's alignment and prevalent social mores. For example, if a city forbids halflings within its walls, an urban soul based there is more likely to be unfriendly to halflings. If two cities are rivals, urban souls hailing from those cities are probably enemies too.

NPC Reactions

If a particular urban soul is well known within a city, most long-term residents have an initial attitude of friendly (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). Even if an urban soul moves from city to city or keeps a low profile, he gets a +2 circumstance bonus during interactions with a city's long-term residents.

Conversely, those who threaten a city's status quo have an instinctive dislike of urban souls. An urban soul interacting with criminals, invaders, or other enemies of the city takes a –2 circumstance penalty on interactions, except for uses of the Intimidate skill.

URBAN SOUL LORE

Characters with Knowledge (local) or Gather Information (used within a city) can research urban souls to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "An urban soul is a magical guardian of a city. Every city has one."

DC 15: "Urban souls are chosen by the god of cities, Urbanus, to protect the cities in their care. The bigger the city, the more powerful the urban soul." This DC is also sufficient to learn basic details about a famous urban soul affiliated with a particular city.

DC 20: "Urban souls depend on the city for their power. Outside a city, they're a lot less dangerous."

DC 30: Detailed information about specific urban souls active in a particular city recently, except for urban souls who took pains to remain incognito during their visit.

URBAN SOULS IN THE GAME

The viability of an urban soul PC depends on an agreement (whether implicit or explicit) between player and

DM. Because much of the urban soul's power works only within a city's boundaries, it's not fair for a DM to offer this prestige class, then set adventures in far-off dungeons, hostile wilderness, or other isolated sites. But the player of the urban soul should expect that on occasion, the action will head beyond the city walls—the DM has a whole table of players to keep happy.

D&D is a game of challenges, and the DM has every right to design occasional encounters that are particularly difficult for urban souls because they involving leaving the city. As long as an urban soul character can use his best powers most of the time and relishes the additional challenges when they happen, this prestige class can enrich a campaign.

With an urban soul in the game, you have a built-in excuse to develop adventure sites and interesting places within the cities of your campaign world. If the urban soul at your table wants to protect a specific city, you now have a base of operations for the rest of the party.

Adaptation

While this prestige class is designed with humans in mind, it's easy to imagine that Urbanus would choose nonhuman urban souls for cities dominated by other races. The illithid city of Illkool Rrem might have a mind flayer urban soul, for example, and the dwarf city of Uruz probably has a dwarf urban soul. But in most campaign worlds, only humans have a vast network of cities that stretch across dozens of nations and societies. Nonhuman urban souls are tied to a smaller set of cities, so they may have a harder time adventuring.

Encounters

An encounter with an urban soul should show off urban terrain as much as possible. Battles on the rooftops, in the sewers, or in a crowded marketplace make the urban environment come to life—and they offer plenty of opportunities for an urban soul to use a wide array of class features.

EL 10: Walvor the urban soul is visiting a series of cities, trying to find one with a government to her liking—the more heavy-handed, the better. She's traveling in the company of a vampire bodyguard, a gift from the head of the assassins guild in the last city Walvor visited. Because both Walvor and the vampire can use *spider climb*, they'll scramble up nearby buildings to gain an edge in combat, or to escape via the rooftops if they're overmatched.

Walvor: Female human rogue 7/urban soul 2; CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 7d6+7 plus 2d8+2; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (2d4+4, *+1 spiked chain*) or +10 ranged (1d6+2, masterwork composite shortbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (2d4+4, *+1 spiked chain*) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+2, masterwork composite shortbow); SA sneak attack +4d6; SQ city ramparts 1/day, citybred senses +2, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge, urban sustenance; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Gather Information +14, Hide +15, Jump +6, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +4, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +12 (+14 in cities), Move Silently +15, Search –1 (+1 secret doors, +1 in cities, +3 secret doors in cities), Spot +12 (+14 in cities), Survival +0 (+2 in urban areas), Tumble +17; Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Language: Common.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Walvor does an extra 4d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Walvor may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with her sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Citybred Senses (Ex): Walvor gains a +2 insight bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks made within a city.

City Ramparts (Ex): Once per day, Walvor can call upon the might of the city to fortify herself in body and mind. The following changes are in effect as long as she benefits from the City Ramparts ability: hp increase by 18; SQ damage reduction 5/adamantine; Fort +8, Will +4. This effect lasts for 13 rounds if Walvor is in a metropolis, 8 rounds if she's in a large city, 6 rounds if she's in a small city, and 3 rounds otherwise.

Evasion (Ex): If Walvor is exposed to any effect that normally allows her to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, she takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Trapfinding (Ex): Walvor can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. She can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If her Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, she discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Walvor retains her Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (she still loses her Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Urban Sustenance (Ex): While within a city, Walvor need not eat, drink, or sleep, and she heals at twice the normal rate. She doesn't heal naturally at all beyond a city. If she remains outside a city for 24 hours, she must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage and 1 point of Constitution damage. Each day after the first that she remains outside a city, the DC of the save increases by 1.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +1 spiked chain, masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *slippers of spider climbing.*

Vampire, 5th-Level Human Fighter: hp 32, see *Monster Manual* p. 250.

EL 17: Parethian is the urban soul bonded to the city of Rel Astra, although you can use him in whatever city you wish. He's an antagonist if the PCs intend mayhem in his city, but he's a useful ally if the PCs wind up in trouble over their heads. Parethian might hire the PCs to take care of an emerging threat to his city, especially if the threat lies well beyond the city walls.

Parethian: Male human bard 7/urban soul 10; CR 17; Medium humanoid; HD 7d6 plus 10d8; hp 72; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +12; Grp +13; Atk +16 melee (1d8+3, +2 *longsword*); Full +16/+11/+6 melee (1d8+3, +2 *longsword*); SA mob violence 10 rounds, *urban renewal*; SQ bardic music 7/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, *suggestion*), bardic knowledge +6, city bond, citybred senses +6, city ramparts 3/day, *hear the city* 2/day, *intracity teleport, meld into city, see the city* 3/day, urban skill mastery, urban sustenance; AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +16, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Gather Information +28, Intimidate +8, Jump +7, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +4, Knowledge (local) +19, Listen +17 (+23 in Rel Astra), Perform (sing) +21, Search –1 (+1 secret doors, +5 in Rel Astra, +7 secret doors in Rel Astra), Spot +12 (+18 in Rel Astra), Survival +2 (+4 in urban areas), Tumble +15; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Language: Common.

Mob Violence (Su): As a free action, Parethian can channel the city's power to deal an extra 3d6 points of damage with any successful attack. He can activate mob violence for 10 rounds per day, split up as he likes.

Urban Renewal (Sp): A total of five times per day, Parethian can use any of the following spell-like abilities (caster level 10th): *disintegrate* (objects only), *stone shape*, and *wall of stone*.

Bardic Music: Use bardic music seven times per day. See the bard class feature, page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Countersong (Su): Use music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound.

Fascinate (Sp): Use music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with him.

Inspire Competence (Su): Use music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task.

Inspire Courage (Su): Use music or poetics to bolster his allies against fear and improve their combat abilities.

Suggestion (Sp): Use music or poetics to make a *suggestion* (as the spell) to a creature that he has already fascinated.

City Bond (Su): As long as Parethian remains within the boundaries of Rel Astra, he does not age. His class features that depend on being inside a city function only when he's within Rel Astra. His chosen city is considered a metropolis when he's using his class features, regardless of its actual current size.

Citybred Senses (Ex): Parethian gains a +6 insight bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks made within Rel Astra.

City Ramparts (Ex): Three times per day, Parethian can call upon the might of the city to fortify himself in body and mind. The following changes are in effect as long as he benefits from the city ramparts ability: hp increase by 34; SQ damage reduction 5/adamantine; Fort +11, Will +12. This effect lasts for 13 rounds as long as Parethian remains in Rel Astra.

Hear the City (Sp): Twice per day, Parethian can speak with a building, street, or other part of a city. This is the equivalent of a *stone tell* spell, caster level 10th, except that it works on any part of a city.

Intracity Teleport (Sp): At will, Parethian can use *greater teleport* (as a full-round action) between any two points within Rel Astra.

Meld Into City (Sp): Parethian can meld his body and possessions into any stone structure that is part of Rel Astra. This functions like *meld into stone*, usable at will, caster level 10th.

See the City (Sp): Parethian can create a magical sensor (as *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, except that only sight is allowed) three times per day, caster level 10th. The sensor can observe anywhere within Rel Astra.

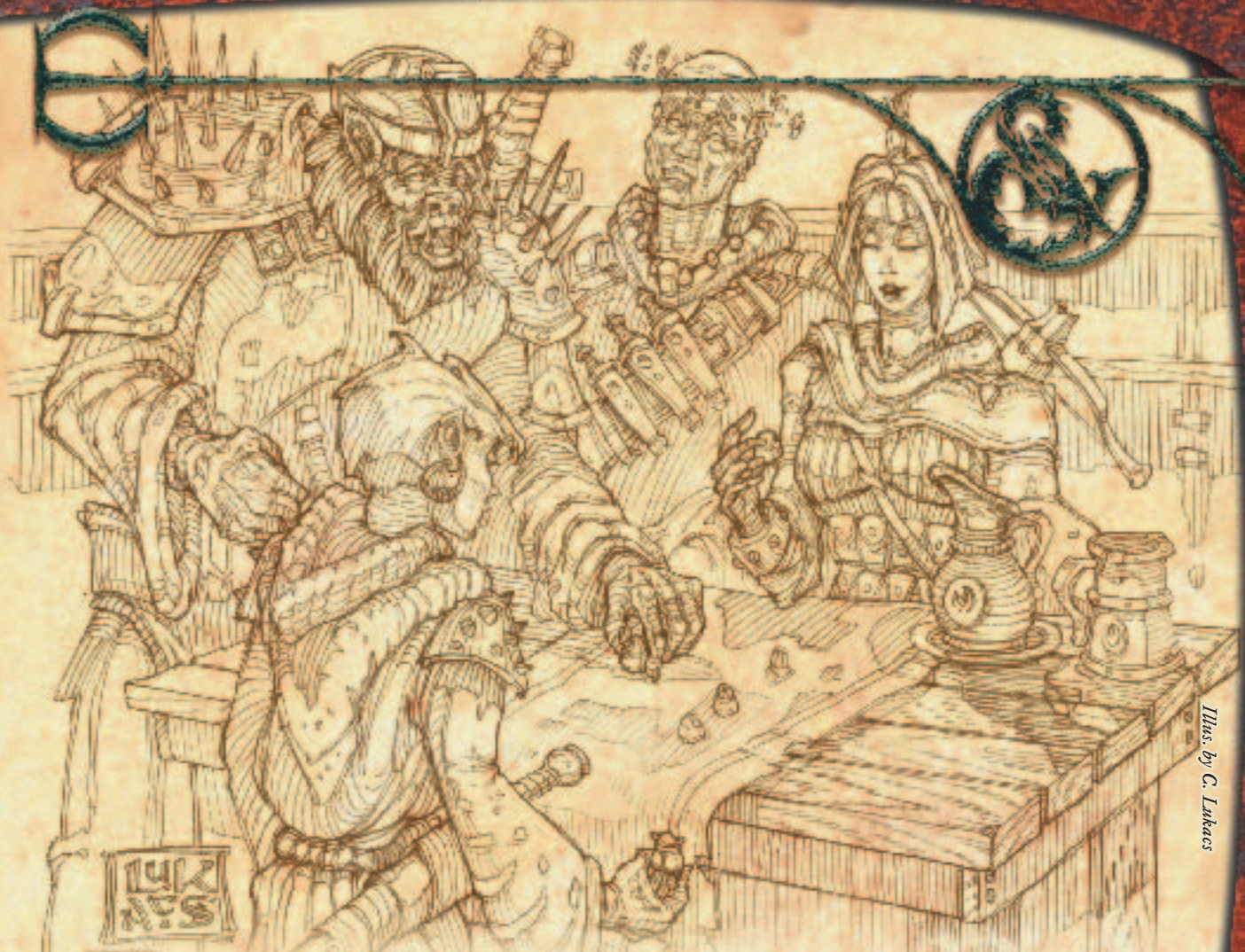
Substitution Level: Parethian has taken the city-bonded substitution level instead of his normal 10th level of urban soul.

Urban Skill Mastery (Ex): Parethian can take 10 with any of the following skills even when under stress: Balance, Climb, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble.

Urban Sustenance (Ex): While within Rel Astra, Parethian need not eat, drink, or sleep, and he heals at twice the normal rate. He doesn't heal naturally at all outside of Rel Astra. If he remains outside Rel Astra for 24 hours, he must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage and 1 point of Constitution damage. Each day after the first that he remains outside his city, the DC of the save increases by 1.

Bard Spells Known (3/5/4/1 per day; caster level 7th): 0—*detect magic, flare* (DC 16), *ghost sound, light, lullaby* (DC 16), *message*; 1st—*alarm, disguise self, feather fall, grease* (DC 17); 2nd—*cure moderate wounds, enthrall* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 18), *tongues*; 3rd—*displacement, fear* (DC 19).

Possessions: +2 longsword, +3 mithral breastplate, +3 buckler, cloak of Charisma +4, gloves of Dexterity +4, ring of invisibility, boots of speed.



Illus. by C. Lukacs

A common trait among the races of destiny is versatility. This chapter provides new skill uses, feats, and substitution levels for human, half-elf, half-orc, and illumian characters.

SKILLS

The following section describes new uses for the skills noted in the *Player's Handbook*.

DECIPHER SCRIPT (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

In addition to piecing together the gist of an ancient scroll or tome written in some obscure language, Decipher Script allows you to write in code to conceal the meaning of your writing so others cannot read it while you (and anyone who knows the code) can.

Check: You can create a secret code that befuddles the reader. The DC is 20 for the simplest of messages, 25 for a standard text, and 30 or higher for extremely lengthy or complex writings. The DC for someone using the Decipher Script skill to decode the text is equal to your check result. Anyone with a key to your code can read the text normally, although a separate Decipher Script check may be necessary if the original text was confusing and esoteric in the first place.

Failure to decode the text has the same effects as for other uses of the Decipher Script skill, as described on page 71 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Action: Deciphering the equivalent of a single page of coded script takes 1 hour.

Try Again: No.

DISGUISE (CHA)

Sometimes you want to make an object to appear like something else. This skill lets you modify the appearance of an object to slip it past guards or to make it appear as some innocuous piece of equipment.

Check: You can use this skill to temporarily change the appearance of an object, so that it is not immediately evident what function the object actually serves. This use of the skill requires time and some additional material to "dress up" the object.

Size of Object	Time Required
Tiny or smaller	1d6×5 minutes
Small to Large	1d8×10 minutes
Huge or larger	1d10×20 minutes

The object's disguise can include an apparent change of height or weight of no more than one-tenth the original unless specially crafted accessories are utilized (possibly requiring a separate Craft check). Your Disguise check result is opposed by the Search checks of anyone looking at the item, or otherwise searching in the area in question.

Try Again: No.

Special: The DM makes the Disguise check for you secretly, so that you're not sure how well the object's disguise holds up to close examination.

GATHER INFORMATION (CHA)

In addition to finding out juicy bits of rumor, you can use this skill to understand an organization's structure, including finding out who's in charge and what sort of authority the leader has.

Check: You can learn a broad overview of the command structure of an organization: who the officers or leaders are; how many layers of command exist between the highest-level officers and the average foot soldier (or entry-level operative); how to identify ranks within the organization; and what kind of authority the various members have. Discovering the names of specific members of the organization adds 10 to the DC of the Gather Information check, and knowing their location adds another 5.

The more secretive the organization, the more difficult this information is to obtain. Publicly recognized organizations are much easier to learn about than organizations that don't officially exist. You can only obtain this information if someone in the community actually knows it. At the DM's discretion, members of the local community may be completely ignorant of an organization operating in their area. For example, if a bandit crew is using the remote and long-abandoned monastery dozens of miles away, and no one outside the organization knows they are there, the average citizen can't provide any information about their command structure.

The table below shows the various DCs and examples of what sorts of groups they represent.

Organization	DC	Examples
Public	10	Local government, local guild
Private	15	Private club, military
Exclusive	20	Invitation-only club, local criminals
Secretive	25	Espionage group, criminal cartel
Unknown	30	Shadow government, underground cult

KNOWLEDGE (NOBILITY AND ROYALTY) (INT)

Knowledge about the intricacies of the noble and royal courts also gives insight into the bureaucracy that helps support them. This skill lets you know the easiest ways to bypass the multiple layers of assistants, majordomos, and chamberlains to meet with the person in charge.

Check: You can use this skill to discover the levels of bureaucracy within a royal household, government, or other large body of authority. If you make a check (DC 15 + organization size modifier; see below), you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Gather Information checks pertaining to that particular organization for one week. However, failure by 5 or more means you make a false assessment of the situation, imposing a –2 penalty on the use of those skills for one week instead. (The DM should make this check in secret, and apply the appropriate modifier when required.) The size and complexity of the organization may provide a bonus or a penalty on this check; see the table below.

Illus. by M. Moore

One of many ways in which information can change hands

Organization	DC Modifier
Minor noble house	+0
Average noble house	+5
Major noble house	+10
Empire, vast kingdom	+15
Member of noble house	–5

Action: Usually none. In most cases, making a Knowledge check doesn't take an action—you either know the answer or you don't.

Try Again: No. The check represents what you know, and thinking about a topic a second time doesn't let you know something you never learned in the first place.

KNOWLEDGE (RELIGION) (INT)

Churches, cults, and religious sects have their own structure, levels of hierarchy, and procedures for accomplishing tasks, all in the name of tending to their flocks and worshiping their deities. As with Knowledge (nobility and royalty) above, you know how to navigate the maze of clerks, scribes, and church leaders to talk to the person you want.

Check: You can use this skill to understand the structure of authority within a church, cult, or other religious organization. If you make a check (DC 15 + organization size modifier; see below), you gain a +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Gather Information checks made during the next week that pertain to that particular organization. However, failure by 5 or more means you make a false assessment of the situation, imposing a –2 penalty on the use of those skills for one week instead. The size and complexity of the organization may provide a bonus or a penalty on this check; see the table below.

Organization	DC Modifier
Single parish	+0
Town-sized territory	+5
City-sized territory	+10
Metropolis-sized territory	+15
Chaotic religion	+5
Lawful religion	–5
Member of the church	–5

Action: Usually none. In most cases, making a Knowledge check doesn't take an action—you simply know the answer or you don't.

Try Again: No. The check represents what you know, and thinking about a topic a second time doesn't let you know something you never learned in the first place.

LISTEN (WIS)

Sometimes you want to hear a whispered conversation across the room or make out what two people are talking about in a loud, crowded room.

Check: You can use this skill to clarify overheard conversations. The DCs given in the *Player's Handbook* are based simply on hearing someone moving or talking. To understand any conversation that is being spoken near to you (but not directly at you), your Listen check must exceed the DC by 10.

Environment	DC Modifier
Next booth in a tavern	+2
Bustling city street corner	+5
Busy tavern	+10
Crowded market place	+15
Riot	+20

Action: Each check takes a full round of listening.

Try Again: No.

SURVIVAL (WIS)

The Survival skill is not only important in the wilderness, but can be the difference between life and death on the mean streets of the city. In huge cities, the poor and destitute must scrounge for food, find places to sleep, and avoid dangerous animals that call the streets home.

Check: You can keep yourself and others safe and fed in urban settings. The table below gives the DCs for various tasks that require Survival checks.

DC	Task
10	Get along in an urban setting without paying for food or services. You can provide relatively clean water and fresh food for one other person for every 2 points by which your check results exceeds 10.
15	Locate a relatively warm and dry place to stay in for a 24-hour period. You must reroll this check every day.
15	Keep from getting lost in confusing streets with which you are not familiar.
Varies	Follow tracks (see the Track feat, page 101 of the *Player's Handbook*). Most streets in urban settings are a mix of soft (mud) and hard (cobblestones) surfaces.

Action: Varies. A single Survival check may represent activity over the course of hours or a full day.

Try Again: Varies. For getting along in urban settings or finding a warm and dry place, you make a Survival check once every 24 hours. The result of that check applies until the next check is made.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (local), you gain a +2 bonus on Survival checks within urban areas covered by your expertise in that skill.

FEATS

This section provides new feats that focus the strengths and abilities of the races of destiny. Some of the feats described here are appropriate for half-elves, half-orcs, and illlumians, while others are reserved for full-blooded humans.

RACIAL FEATS

Feats marked with the [Racial] tag require the character to be of a specific race in order to select the feat. These feats share no other special properties and are considered to be a subset of a larger category of feats (in this book, all racial feats are general feats).

GENERAL AND RACIAL FEATS

The feat descriptions below use the same format presented in the *Player's Handbook*.

ABLE LEARNER [RACIAL]

You have a great aptitude for learning.

Prerequisite: Human or doppelganger.

Benefit: All skill ranks cost 1 skill point for you to purchase, even if the skill is cross-class for you. The maximum number of ranks you can purchase in a cross-class skill remains the same.

This feat does not affect the skill point cost to learn a language or to gain literacy (for a barbarian or other illiterate character).

Normal: Cross-class skills cost 2 skill points per rank.

Special: This feat may only be taken at 1st level.

BRIGHT SIGIL [RACIAL]

You have established a greater degree of control over your sigils. When you concentrate, you can emit strong illumination from the glowing symbols that surround your head.

Prerequisite: Illumian.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can increase the illumination from your illumian sigils to provide a bright glow. Your sigils shed illumination equivalent to a *daylight* spell. The brighter light lasts as long as you concentrate, and for 1 round thereafter.

Normal: An illumian's sigils ordinarily emit a 5-foot radius of shadowy illumination, equivalent to a candle.

CHANNELED RAGE [RACIAL]

You can focus your rage to counter charms and compulsions.

Prerequisites: Half-orc, ability to rage.

Benefit: You may spend one of your daily uses of rage as an immediate action to add your Strength bonus on a Will saving throw.

CITY SLICKER

You are very familiar with city life and the inner workings of your hometown.

Benefit: Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, and Knowledge (local) are always class skills for you.

Special: This feat may only be taken at 1st level.

COMPLEMENTARY INSIGHT [RACIAL]

You get more out of having skills that work well together.

Prerequisite: Half-elf.

Benefit: Having 5 or more ranks in a skill gives you a +3 bonus on skill checks with each of its synergistic skills, as noted in the skill description.

Normal: Synergistic skills provide a +2 bonus on skill checks.

DIVERSE BACKGROUND [RACIAL]

You have a wide and diverse background, giving you a greater understanding of different occupations.

Prerequisite: Half-human.

VARIANT: HALF-HUMANS AND HUMANLIKE RACES

According to the *Player's Handbook,* half-elves and half-orcs are treated as elves and as orcs, respectively, for the purpose of determining various game effects, but not as humans. Other humanlike races, such as the aasimars and tieflings, are described as "humans" with a trace of celestial or fiendish blood, but are outsiders rather than humanoids.

These limitations mean that many options available in this book are off limits to such races. At the DM's discretion, half-human and humanlike races can be grouped together with humans as humanoids with the human subtype (rather than their own subtype). This means that such races qualify as human for the purpose of meeting a prerequisite for a feat or prestige class, for activating a human-only magic item, for adjudicating effects that treat humans differently from other races, and the like.

For most half-human races, this is only a very minor change. Such races retain whatever humanoid subtypes they possessed, while gaining the human subtype. Half-elves, for example, would have both the human and elf subtypes, while half-orcs would have both the human and orc subtypes. Half-ogres (see Chapter 4) would retain their giant type while also gaining the human subtype. Typically, the result is that such races enjoy all the benefits (and suffer all the drawbacks) provided by both subtypes. For example, half-elves could use human-only magic items while still qualifying for elf-only prestige classes.

In the case of other half-humans or humanlike races, this represents a much larger change. Planetouched races descended from humans would change from outsiders with the native subtype to humanoids with the human subtype. Planetouched races that this change affects include the aasimar and tiefling (see Chapter 4), the chaond and zenythri (from *Monster Manual II*), the mechanatrix and shyft (from *Fiend Folio*), and the genasi (from *Monsters of Faerûn*). Half-celestial, half-fiend, and half-dragon humans would change from outsiders or dragons to humanoids with the human subtype. Regardless, these characters would retain any traits possessed by all creatures of their original type (outsiders retain darkvision; dragons retain darkvision, low-light vision, and immunity to sleep and paralysis; and so forth).

If you choose not to offer this variant, you can achieve a similar effect with the Human Heritage feat (see page 152).

Table 6–1: New Feats

General Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Able Learner*	Human or doppelganger	Cross-class skills cost less per rank
Bright Sigil	Illumian	You can increase the illumination from your sigils
Channeled Rage	Half-orc, ability to rage	Use rage to improve Will saves
City Slicker*	—	Certain skills are class skills for you
Complementary Insight	Half-elf	Increase bonus from skill synergy to +3
Diverse Background*	Half-human	You gain a second favored class
Enhanced Power Sigils	Illumian, two power sigils	Increase bonuses from power sigils by +1
Heroic Destiny	Human or half-human	Add +1d6 to d20 roll once per day
Protected Destiny	Human or half-human, Heroic Destiny, character level 3rd	Reroll saving throw once per day
Fearless Destiny	Human or half-human, Heroic Destiny, character level 6th	Avoid death once per day
Human Heritage*	Half-human or human-descended race	You gain the human subtype and 4 skill points
Improved Sigil (*Aesh*)	Illumian, *aesh* power sigil	Bonus on melee weapon damage with Weapon Focus
Improved Sigil (*Hoon*)	Illumian, *hoon* power sigil	Bonus on saves against death effects, massive damage, and some environmental effects
Improved Sigil (*Krau*)	Illumian, *krau* power sigil	You can cast some spells at higher CL
Improved Sigil (*Naen*)	Illumian, *naen* power sigil	Bonus on saves against illusions and language-dependent effects
Improved Sigil (*Uur*)	Illumian, *uur* power sigil	Bonus on ranged weapon damage against targets denied Dex bonus
Improved Sigil (*Vaul*)	Illumian, *vaul* power sigil	Bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting spells and abilities
Inside Connection	—	+4 bonus on checks to interact with a specific organization
Menacing Demeanor	Orc blood or orc subtype	You gain a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks
Resourceful Buyer	—	Communities are considered larger for you when buying equipment
Smatterings	Int 13	You can communicate in languages you don't know
Sociable Personality	Half-elf, Cha 13	You may reroll Diplomacy and Gather Information checks
Subtle Sigil	Illumian	You can make your sigils disappear
Urban Stealth	Knowledge (local) 2 ranks	+3 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks in cities
Urban Tracking	—	Use Gather Information to track down person

*May only be selected at 1st level.

Initiate Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Arcane Insight	Cleric level 3rd, deity Boccob	Knowledge (arcana) is a class skill, +2 on Spellcraft checks, additional spells
Dread Tyranny	Cleric level 3rd, Str 13, deity Hextor	Intimidate is a class skill, add Str bonus to Intimidate checks, additional spells
Eternal Strength	Cleric level 5th, Str 13, deity Kord	+4 on saves vs. Str damage or drain, additional spells
Far Horizons	Cleric level 1st, deity Fharlanghn	Climb, Jump, and Swim are class skills, always know north, additional spells
Law Inviolate	Cleric level 1st, lawful alignment, deity St. Cuthbert	Weapons are lawful, additional spells
Radiant Fire	Cleric level 3rd, deity Pelor	+2 damage against evil creatures, additional spells
Undying Fate	Cleric level 3rd, deity Wee Jas	Determine if other creatures are dying, additional spells
Whispered Secrets	Cleric level 1st, deity Vecna	Listen and Spot are class skills, aware of divination attempts, additional spells

Tactical Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Crowd Tactics	Hide 5 ranks, Dodge	Gain move and skill bonuses in crowds
Roofwalker	Balance 5 ranks, Jump 5 ranks, Dodge, Mobility	Gain move, skill, and AC bonuses on rooftops

Benefit: Choose one class. That class is also a favored class for you.

Special: This feat may only be taken at 1st level.

ENHANCED POWER SIGILS [RACIAL]

Your illumian power sigils are more powerful than normal.

Prerequisites: Illumian, two power sigils.

Benefit: The bonuses granted by each of your power sigils improve by 1.

Normal: Without this feat, the bonuses granted by each of your power sigils are equal to the number of power sigils you possess.

FEARLESS DESTINY [RACIAL]

Your grand destiny allows you to avoid death.

Prerequisites: Human or half-human, Heroic Destiny, character level 6th.

Benefit: Once per day, any effect that would reduce you to –10 hit points or fewer instead reduces you to –9 hit points and leaves you in a stable condition.

Effects that kill you without reducing you to –10 hit points (such as death effects or *disintegrate*) function normally.

HEROIC DESTINY [RACIAL]

You have a destiny to fulfill.

Prerequisite: Human or half-human.

Benefit: Once per day, before you make an attack roll, ability check, skill check, saving throw, or caster level check, you may roll 1d6 and add it as a bonus on the roll, check, or save.

HUMAN HERITAGE [RACIAL]

Your human heritage is more prominent than in others of your kind.

Prerequisite: Half-human race or human-descended race.

Benefit: You are treated as a humanoid with the human subtype for the purpose of adjudicating all effects. If you are not a humanoid, your type changes to humanoid and you gain the human subtype. If you are already a humanoid, you gain the human subtype. In either case, you retain any other subtypes you had (such as orc or extraplanar), and you retain any traits common to all creatures of your original type (such as darkvision).

You gain 4 additional skill points.

Special: This feat may only be taken at 1st level.

See the Variant: Half-Humans and Human-like Races sidebar, page 150, for more about races eligible to select this feat.

IMPROVED SIGIL (AESH) [RACIAL]

You tap into your *aesh* power sigil to gain enhanced accuracy with your favored melee weapons.

Prerequisites: Illumian, *aesh* power sigil.

Benefit: Your *aesh* power sigil grants you a +1 insight bonus per power sigil on melee weapon damage rolls with any weapon with which you have selected the Weapon Focus feat.

IMPROVED SIGIL (HOON) [RACIAL]

You tap into your *hoon* power sigil to help survive deadly conditions.

Prerequisites: Illumian, *hoon* power sigil.

Benefit: Your *hoon* power sigil grants you a +1 insight bonus per power sigil on saving throws against death effects, on saves to avoid death by massive damage, and on Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage from hot and cold environments or to resist damage from suffocation.

Illus. by J. Miracola

This shackled illumian uses her Improved Sigil (Krau) feat along with a shout spell to incapacitate her captors

IMPROVED SIGIL (KRAU) [RACIAL]

You tap into your *krau* power sigil to augment the energy of your magical utterances.

Prerequisites: Illumian, *krau* power sigil.

Benefit: Choose a number of spells with verbal components that you can cast equal to the number of power sigils you have. When you cast one of the chosen spells, the spell's effective level is increased by 1 (as if affected by the Heighten Spell feat, but with no change to the spell's casting time or spell slot). All effects dependent on spell level are calculated according to the heightened level.

Whenever you gain the ability to cast a new level of spells, you can reassign the spells you've chosen to be enhanced by this feat. For example, a wizard who reaches 3rd level and gains the ability to cast 2nd-level spells may reassign the spells affected by this feat.

Special: If you cast one of your chosen spells using the Silent Spell feat, this feat has no effect.

IMPROVED SIGIL (NAEN) [RACIAL]

You tap into your *naen* power sigil to see through illusions and resist language-based effects.

Prerequisites: Illumian, *naen* power sigil.

Benefit: Your *naen* power sigil grants you a +1 insight bonus per power sigil on saving throws against illusions and against language-dependent effects.

IMPROVED SIGIL (UUR) [RACIAL]

You tap into your *uur* power sigil to gain enhanced accuracy with ranged weapons.

Prerequisites: Illumian, *uur* power sigil.

Benefit: Your *uur* power sigil grants you a +1 insight bonus per power sigil on ranged weapon damage rolls whenever your target is denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

IMPROVED SIGIL (VAUL) [RACIAL]

You tap into your *vaul* power sigil to resist mental effects.

Prerequisites: Illumian, *vaul* power sigil.

Benefit: Your *vaul* power sigil grants you a +1 insight bonus per power sigil on saving throws against mind-affecting spells and abilities.

INSIDE CONNECTION

Choose a specific organization, such as a town's militia, a particular church, a guild, or one of the illumian cabals (see Chapter 3). You have strong personal connections within that organization, as well as insight into its membership.

Benefit: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (local), and Sense Motive checks made in conjunction with that organization.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take this feat, it applies to a new organization.

The DM should limit characters to selecting only those organizations with which they have a positive or neutral relationship. For instance, a character might not be allowed to select an enemy organization, or one whose existence and/or operations aren't well known to him.

MENACING DEMEANOR [RACIAL]

You can tap into your savage heritage to improve your intimidation techniques.

Prerequisite: Orc blood or orc subtype.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks.

PROTECTED DESTINY [RACIAL]

Your heroic destiny is guarded against the whims of misfortune.

Prerequisites: Human or half-human, Heroic Destiny, character level 3rd.

Benefit: Once per day, if you roll a natural 1 on a saving throw, you may reroll the save.

RESOURCEFUL BUYER

You know where to look in a community for anything you need.

Benefit: Whenever you are buying goods, the community you're in is treated as one category larger for the purpose of determining the community's gold piece limit on the most expensive item available (see Table 5–2: Random Town Generation, page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). For example, when you are in a village, the gold piece limit on the most expensive item available to you is 800 gp rather than 200 gp.

Special: This benefit doesn't stack with any other effect that grants a similar benefit.

SMATTERINGS

You have a talent for acquiring languages—at least enough of each one to get by.

Prerequisite: Int 13.

Benefit: You can learn enough of a language to ask and understand simple questions, explanations, and instructions. This benefit only applies to verbal communication. After 2d6 days of listening to a new language, you know enough to ask simple questions and to follow simple directions. Upon every future encounter with this language, you need only 1d4 days to regain that knowledge.

SOCIABLE PERSONALITY [RACIAL]

You are adroit at avoiding social gaffes.

Prerequisites: Half-elf, Cha 13.

Benefit: You may reroll any Diplomacy or Gather Information checks. You must take the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll.

SUBTLE SIGIL [RACIAL]

You are able to fade your sigils into invisibility, but still tap their magical energy.

Prerequisite: Illumian.

Benefit: You can make your sigils disappear or reappear as a free action. You gain the full benefits of your power sigils even when they are not visible.

Normal: Illumians can douse their sigils or make them reappear with a standard action, and they lose the benefits of their power sigils as long as they are doused.

URBAN STEALTH

You are particularly adept at moving quietly and unnoticed through the city.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (local) 2 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks in a small city or larger community.

This bonus applies only when you are outside—trying to hide in a bedroom or office does not benefit from this feat, since your knowledge of urban environments is no help in such confined spaces.

URBAN TRACKING

You can track down the location of missing persons or wanted individuals within communities.

Benefit: To find the trail of an individual or to follow it for 1 hour requires a Gather Information check. You must make another Gather Information check for every hour of the search, as well as each time the trail becomes difficult to follow, such as when it moves to a different area of town.

The DC of the check, and the number of checks required to track down your quarry, depend on the community size and the conditions; see the table below:

Community Size*	DC	Checks Required
Thorp, hamlet, or village	5	1d3
Small or large town	10	1d4+1
Small or large city	15	2d4
Metropolis	20	2d4+2

*See page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Condition	DC Modifier
Every three creatures in the group being sought	–1
Every 24 hours party has been missing/sought	+1
Tracked party "lies low"	+5
Tracked party matches community's primary racial demographic*	–2
Tracked party does not match community's primary or secondary racial demographic *	+2

*See Racial Demographics, page 139 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

If you fail a Gather Information check, you can retry after 1 hour of questioning. The DM should roll the number of checks required secretly, so that the player doesn't know exactly how long the task will require.

Normal: A character without this feat can use Gather Information to find out information about a particular individual, but each check takes 1d4+1 hours and doesn't allow effective trailing.

Special: You can cut the time per Gather Information check in half (to 30 minutes per check), but you take a –5 penalty on the check.

INITIATE FEATS

Initiate feats show that a follower has achieved some distinction with his or her patron deity, and therefore has gained access to additional spells and abilities. Some of these feats allow the addition of these spells to the spell lists of other classes. If you have more than one class that qualifies for this addition, you must choose only one spell list to which they will be added. No character can have more than one initiate feat, since such a feat presumes a deep level of commitment to a single deity.

ARCANE INSIGHT [INITIATE]

By immersing yourself in the teachings of Boccob, you have unearthed magical secrets and gained special insight into arcane spellcasting.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 3rd, deity Boccob.

Benefit: Add Knowledge (arcana) to your list of cleric class skills. You gain a +2 insight bonus on Spellcraft checks.

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

1st **True Strike:** +20 on your next attack roll.
3rd **Arcane Sight:** Magical auras become visible to you.
5th **Rary's Telepathic Bond:** Link lets allies communicate.
7th **Arcane Sight, Greater:** As *arcane sight,* but also reveals magic effects on creatures and objects.
8th **Moment of Prescience:** You gain insight bonus on a single attack roll, check, or save.

DREAD TYRANNY [INITIATE]

A devoted student of Hextor's militant teachings, you are skilled at intimidating and dominating weaker beings.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 3rd, Str 13, deity Hextor.

Benefit: Add Intimidate to your list of cleric class skills. You add your Strength bonus in addition to your Charisma bonus on Intimidate checks. Furthermore, when you use a lethal weapon to deal nonlethal damage, you lessen the penalty on attack rolls by 2 (–2 penalty instead of –4).

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

2nd **Scare:** Frightens creatures of less than 6 HD.
4th **Evard's Black Tentacles:** Tentacles grapple all within 15-ft. spread.
5th **Dominate Person:** Controls humanoid telepathically.
6th **Eyebite:** Target becomes panicked, sickened, and comatose.

8th **Demand:** Delivers short message and *suggestion* anywhere, instantly.
9th **Dominate Monster:** As *dominate person,* but any creature.

ETERNAL STRENGTH [INITIATE]

You have taken Kord's fighting ways to heart. Throwing yourself into every brawl, you draw upon your mighty deity's strength.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 5th, Str 13, deity Kord.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on saving throws to resist effects that deal Strength damage or cause Strength drain.

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

3rd **Heroism:** Gives +2 bonus on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks.
5th **Waves of Fatigue:** Several targets become fatigued.
6th **Heroism, Greater:** Gives +4 bonus on attack rolls, saves, skill checks; immunity to fear; temporary hp.
7th **Waves of Exhaustion:** Several targets become exhausted.

FAR HORIZONS [INITIATE]

By dedicating yourself to the philosophies of Fharlanghn, you have become a more world-wise and capable traveler.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 1st, deity Fharlanghn.

Benefit: Add Climb, Jump, and Swim to your list of cleric class skills. Furthermore, you always know the direction of north from your current position. You cannot use this extraordinary ability in any environment where "north" does not exist.

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

1st **Expeditious Retreat:** Your speed increases by 30 ft.
3rd **Leomund's Tiny Hut:** Creates shelter for ten creatures.
5th **Overland Flight:** You fly at a speed of 40 ft. and can hustle over long distances.
6th **Shadow Walk:** Step into shadow to travel rapidly.

LAW INVIOLATE [INITIATE]

Your unshakable faith in St. Cuthbert allows you to better apprehend fugitives or overcome villains who transgress the law.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 1st, must be lawful, deity St. Cuthbert.

Benefit: Your natural weapons, as well as any weapons you wield, are treated as lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

1st **Color Spray:** Knocks unconscious, blinds, and/or stuns 1d6 weak creatures.
2nd **Daze Monster:** Living creature of 6 HD or less loses next action.
3rd **Suggestion:** Compels subject to follow stated course of action.
5th **Passwall:** Creates passage through wood or stone wall.
6th **Suggestion, Mass:** As *suggestion,* plus one subject/level.
8th **Power Word Stun:** Stuns creature with 150 hp or less.

RADIANT FIRE [INITIATE]

Pelor has ignited your faith and conviction, making you better able to fight the creatures of darkness.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 3rd, deity Pelor.

Benefit: You gain a +2 insight bonus on damage rolls against creatures with the evil subtype.

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

Level	Spell
2nd	**Scorching Ray:** Ranged touch attack deals 4d6 fire damage, +1 ray/four levels (maximum 3).
3rd	**Summon Monster III*:** Calls extraplanar creature to fight for you.
5th	**Summon Monster V*:** Calls extraplanar creature to fight for you.
6th	**Summon Monster VI*:** Calls extraplanar creature to fight for you.
8th	**Summon Monster VIII*:** Calls extraplanar creature to fight for you.

*Fire elementals only.

UNDYING FATE [INITIATE]

You have pledged your unswerving obedience to Wee Jas, and she in turn has granted you special insight into life and death.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 3rd, deity Wee Jas.

Benefit: As a swift action, you can determine how close creatures are to death. This extraordinary ability can be used at will but otherwise functions like the *deathwatch* spell.

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

2nd **False Life:** Gain 1d10 temporary hp +1/level (max +10).
3rd **Halt Undead:** Immobilizes undead for 1 round/level.
5th **Blight:** Withers one plant or deals 1d6/level damage to plant creature.
7th **Finger of Death:** Kills one subject or deals 3d6 damage +1/level (max +25).

WHISPERED SECRETS [INITIATE]

You revere the Maimed Lord and have devoted your miserable, worthless life to learning but a few of the Whispered One's secrets.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 1st, deity Vecna.

Benefit: Add Listen and Spot to your list of cleric class skills. Furthermore, you automatically become aware of any attempt to observe you by means of a divination (scrying) spell or effect. This extraordinary ability does not enable you to discern the scrier, the type of scrying device or spell used, or the scrier's location.

In addition, you may add the following spells to your cleric spell list:

1st **Disguise Self:** Changes your appearance.
2nd **Darkvision:** See 60 ft. in total darkness.
3rd **Glibness:** You gain +30 on Bluff checks and your lies can escape magical discernment.
4th **Arcane Eye:** Invisible floating eye moves 30 ft./round.
5th **Prying Eyes:** 1d4 +1/level floating eyes scout for you.
6th **Analyze Dweomer**[F]**:** Reveals magical aspects of subject.
8th **Mind Blank:** Subject is immune to mental/emotional magic and scrying.

TACTICAL FEATS

Feats with the tactical descriptor allow characters to perform a number of powerful actions.

CROWD TACTICS [TACTICAL]

You are adept at moving through and fighting in crowds.

Prerequisites: Hide 5 ranks, Dodge.

Benefit: The Crowd Tactics feat enables the use of three tactical maneuvers. You only gain these benefits if the crowd is indifferent or friendly.

Moving with the Flow: Entering a square with a crowd in it does not cost you extra movement.

One with the Crowd: You gain a +4 bonus on Hide checks made in square with a crowd.

Master of the Mob: You gain a +4 bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks when attempting to direct a crowd.

Normal: See page 100 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on crowds.

ROOFWALKER [TACTICAL]

You are adept at moving and fighting on rooftops and ledges.

Prerequisites: Balance 5 ranks, Jump 5 ranks, Dodge, Mobility.

Benefit: The Roofwalker feat enables the use of three tactical maneuvers.

Fleet of Feet: You can walk across a precarious surface more quickly than normal. You can move at your full speed without taking a –5 penalty on your Balance check.

Graceful Drop: If you intentionally jump from a height, you take less damage than you would if you fell. If you succeed on a Jump check when jumping down (see page 77 of the *Player's Handbook*), you take falling damage as if you had dropped 20 fewer feet than you actually did.

Master of the Roof: You know how to use the slopes to your advantage. You gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC against any opponent who is at a different elevation from you.

RACIAL SUBSTITUTION LEVELS

A substitution level is a level of a given class that you take instead of the level described for the standard class. Selecting a substitution level is not the same as multiclassing—you remain within the class for which the substitution level is taken. The class features of the substitution level simply replace those of the standard level.

Essentially, each set of substitution levels presents a racially flavored variant standard class. The DM may add more racial substitution level options (such as half-elf clerics or half-orc rogues) at his option, using these as guidelines.

To qualify for a racial substitution level, you must be of the proper race. For instance, to select a racial substitution level of half-orc bafrbarian, you must be a half-orc.

Of the four races featured in this book—human, half-elf, half-orc, and illumian—substitution levels are offered here only for half-elves and half-orcs. Humans are far too generalized to take advantage of racial substitution levels, while illumians already possess the capability to adapt their racial abilities to specific classes by choosing particular power sigils.

For each class with racial substitution levels, you can select each substitution level only at a specific class level. When you take a substitution level for your class at a given level, you give up the benefits gained at that level for the standard class, and you get the substitution level benefits instead. You can't go back and gain the benefits for the level you swapped out—when you take your next level in the standard class, you gain the next higher level as if you had gained the previous level normally. For instance, if you are a 5th-level bard and take the half-elf bard substitution level for 6th level, you forever lose the benefits normally provided to a standard 6th-level bard (gaining instead the racial substitution benefits for a 6th-level bard). When you gain another level in bard, you gain the 7th-level benefits of the standard bard class.

Unless otherwise noted in the description of a racial substitution level benefit, a character who takes a racial substitution level gains spellcasting ability (increases in spells per day and spells known, if applicable) as if he had taken this level in the standard class.

A character need not take all the substitution levels provided for a class. For instance, a half-orc barbarian might decide to take only the racial substitution level at 2nd level, ignoring the other substitution levels.

The description of each substitution level benefit explains what occurs to the standard class ability not gained, if that ability would normally increase at a specific rate (such as the gnome ranger's favored enemy).

When a substitution level changes the base class's Hit Die or class skill list, the change applies only to the specific substitution class level, not to any other class levels. A half-orc who takes the half-orc druid substitution level as a beginning character gains 10 hit points (from the substitution level's d10 Hit Die), and gains an additional 1d10 hit points for each additional half-orc druid substitution level she takes later in her career, but she gains only the normal d8 Hit Die for each of her standard druid levels.

HALF-ELF BARD

Blessed with a smooth grace and demeanor that many find appealing, the half-elf bard is a common sight. The half-elf bard gives up some of her performance abilities to become more well versed in social interaction and negotiation.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To take a half-elf bard substitution level, a character must be a half-elf about to take her 1st, 6th, or 8th level of bard.

Class Skills

Half-elf bard substitution levels have the class skills of the standard bard class.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier (or four times this number as a beginning character).

Class Features

All the following are features of the half-elf bard's racial substitution levels.

Soothing Voice (Su): A 1st-level half-elf bard with 3 or more ranks in Diplomacy can spend one daily use of her bardic music to use a composed, steady voice and reason to calm the emotions in others around her. This ability works in much the same way as the half-elf bard's *fascinate* ability, with the following differences.

The creature to be soothed must be within 30 feet of the bard and must be able to understand the language she is speaking. To use this ability, the half-elf bard makes a Diplomacy check. Her check result is the DC for each affected creature's Will save against the effect. On a success, the creature is affected as if by the *calm emotions* spell. The effect lasts as long as the creature listens to the bard, although the creature may wander off on its own if there is nothing to keep its interest.

This benefit replaces the standard bard's ability of countersong.

Command (Sp): A 6th-level half-elf bard with at least 9 ranks in Diplomacy may spend one daily use of her bardic music to issue a *command* (as the spell) to a creature within 30 feet. Alternatively, the *command* can affect all creatures that the bard has affected with her soothing voice or *fascinate* ability. A Will saving throw (DC 11 + bard's Cha modifier) negates the effect.

This benefit replaces the standard bard's ability of *suggestion*.

Secrets of the Diplomat: At 8th level, a half-elf bard adds the following spells to her spells known: 1st—*command*; 2nd—*zone of truth*; 4th—*sending*.

This benefit replaces the 4th-level spell learned by a standard bard at 8th level. From now on, the bard knows one fewer 4th-level bard spell than normal (not counting the spells she learned from this substitution feature).

HALF-ELF FIGHTER

Lacking the bonus feat of humans and the high Dexterity of elves, half-elf fighters are not particularly common. Those who do take up a life of the blade often become talkative swashbucklers who blend quick swordplay with a sharp tongue. They seek to confuse and demoralize foes, rather than overcoming them with brute force.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

To take a half-elf fighter substitution level, a character must be a half-elf about to take her 1st, 2nd, or 6th level of fighter.

Class Skills

Half-elf fighter substitution levels have the class skills of the standard fighter class, plus Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier (or four times this number as a beginning character).

Class Features

All the following are features of the half-elf fighter racial substitution levels.

Blade Focus (Ex): The half-elf fighter focuses his combat talents on fighting with slender blades. At 1st level, the half-elf fighter gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls with the longsword and rapier.

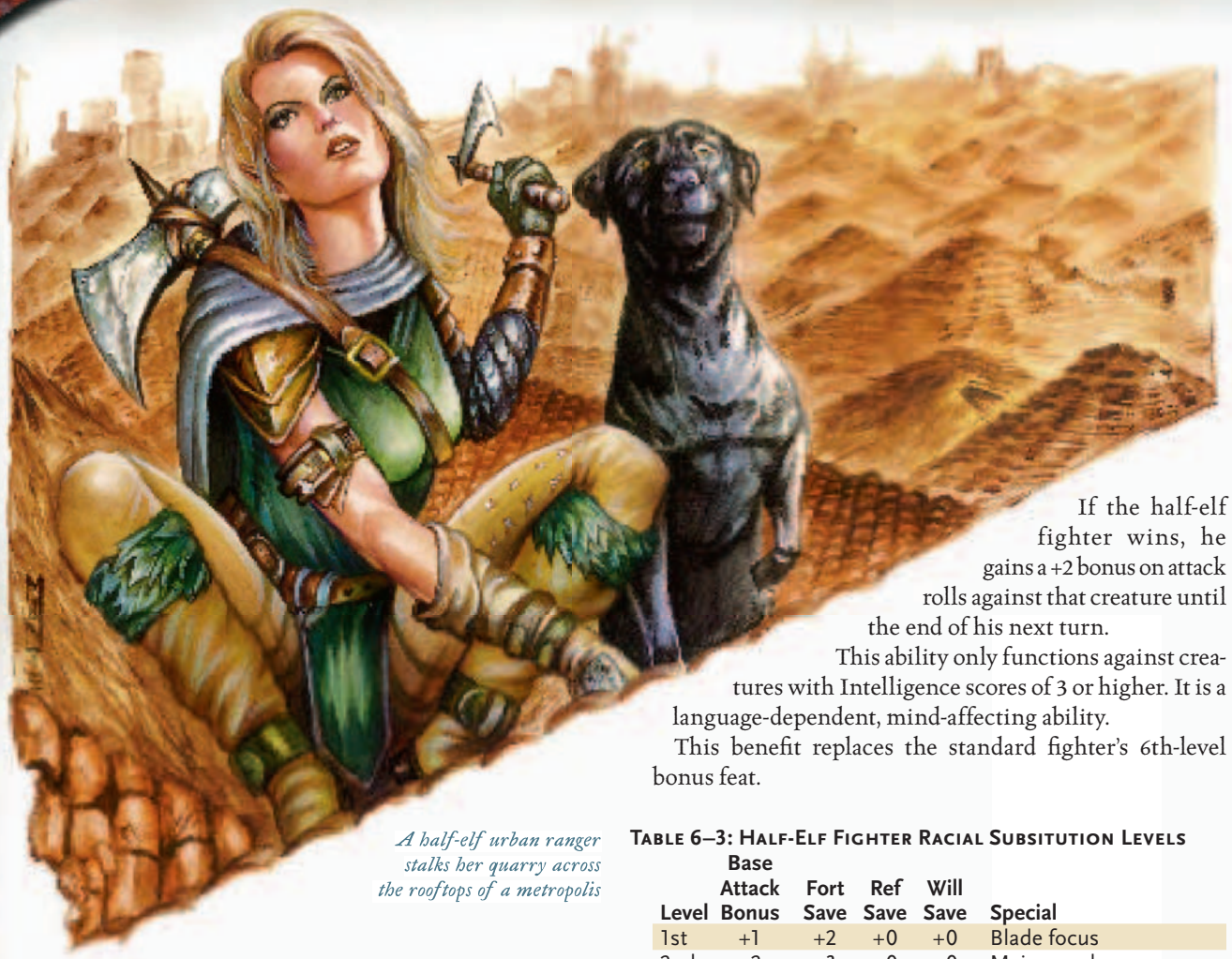
This bonus does not stack with the bonus from Weapon Focus, but is treated as the equivalent of Weapon Focus for the purposes of qualifying for feats, prestige classes, and so on that require the feat. For example a half-elf fighter with this ability could take Weapon Specialization (rapier) without selecting Weapon Focus (rapier) as a separate feat.

This benefit replaces the standard fighter's 1st-level bonus feat.

Main-Gauche (Ex): At 2nd level, the half-elf fighter learns how to fight using a dagger in his off-hand in defense as well as offense. The half-elf fighter is treated as having

Table 6–2: Half-Elf Bard Racial Subsitution Levels

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, *fascinate*, inspire courage +1, soothing voice	As standard bard
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	*Command*	As standard bard
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	Secrets of the diplomat	As standard bard



A half-elf urban ranger stalks her quarry across the rooftops of a metropolis

Illus. by M. Moore

the Two-Weapon Fighting feat when wielding a longsword or rapier in one hand and a dagger in his other hand. In addition, the half-elf fighter gains a +1 bonus to AC during any round that fights defensively while wielding weapons in this manner.

This bonus is treated as the equivalent of Two-Weapon Fighting for the purposes of qualifying for feats and prestige classes that require the feat.

This benefit replaces the standard fighter's 2nd-level bonus feat.

Confusing Banter (Ex): The 6th-level half-elf fighter combines defensive tactics with a stream of wordplay aimed at tricking his opponent into letting his guard down. Whenever a half-elf fighter fights defensively, he may attempt a Bluff or Diplomacy check as a free action, opposed by his opponent's Sense Motive check (the opponent may also add his base attack bonus on this check). If the half-elf fighter wins, he gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against that creature until the end of his next turn.

This ability only functions against creatures with Intelligence scores of 3 or higher. It is a language-dependent, mind-affecting ability.

This benefit replaces the standard fighter's 6th-level bonus feat.

Table 6–3: Half-Elf Fighter Racial Subsitution Levels

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Blade focus
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Main-gauche
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Confusing banter

HALF-ELF RANGER

Not all rangers spend their entire lives in the untamed wilds of the forests and hills. Some half-elves find a mix of rural and urban life to their taste, and temper their wilderness lore with the ability to interact well with a wide range of individuals. The half-elf ranger is the ultimate investigator and bounty hunter. She finds social skills just as important for survival as fighting prowess.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

To take a half-elf ranger substitution level, a character must be a half-elf about to take her 1st, 4th, or 13th level of ranger.

Table 6–4: Half-Elf Ranger Racial Subsitution Levels

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	1st favored enemy, Urban Tracking, wild empathy	As standard ranger
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Animal companion, street magic	As standard ranger
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+4	Skill mastery	As standard ranger

Class Skills

Half-elf ranger substitution levels have the class skills of the standard ranger class, plus Gather Information and Speak Language.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier (or four times this number as a beginning character).

Class Features

All the following are features of the half-elf ranger racial substitution levels.

Urban Tracking (Ex): The half-elf ranger gains Urban Tracking (see page 154) as a bonus feat.

An 8th-level ranger with Urban Tracking can cut the time required per Gather Information check to 30 minutes without taking the normal –5 penalty on the check. (This benefit augments, but does not replace, the standard 8th-level ranger class feature of swift tracker.)

This benefit replaces the Track feat normally gained as a bonus feat by a standard 1st-level ranger.

Street Magic: At 4th level, a half-elf ranger adds the following spells to her class spell list: 1st—*comprehend languages, detect secret doors, message*; 2nd—*detect thoughts, tongues*; 3rd—*phantom steed*; 4th—*dimension door.*

A ranger who selects this substitution feature loses the following spells from her class spell list: 1st—*detect animals or plants, detect snares and pits, entangle, summon nature's ally I;* 2nd—*snare, speak with plants, summon nature's ally II;* 3rd—*command plants, diminish plants, plant growth, summon nature's ally II, tree shape;* 4th—*commune with nature, summon nature's ally IV, tree stride.*

Skill Mastery (Ex): At 13th level, a half-elf ranger becomes so certain in the use of certain skills that she can use them reliably even under adverse conditions. Upon gaining this ability, she selects a number of skills equal to 3 + her Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with one of these skills, she may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent her from doing so.

This benefit replaces the standard ranger's camouflage ability.

HALF-ORC BARBARIAN

Most half-orcs are raised in harsh lands, far from civilization. They tap into their inner anger and power to become devastating berserkers who charge into combat with relish. Those who grew up among orcs are particularly fond of huge, cleaving weapons that can reap terrible destruction. This substitution allows a half-orc barbarian to sacrifice some of his intuitive defenses to become more aggressive in combat.

Hit Die: d12.

Requirements

To take a half-orc barbarian substitution level, a character must be a half-orc about to take his 2nd, 5th, or 7th level of barbarian .

Class Skills

Half-orc barbarian substitution levels have the class skills of the standard barbarian class.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier (or four times this number as a beginning character).

Class Features

All the following are features of the half-orc barbarian racial substitution levels.

Reckless Charge (Su): At 2nd level, the half-orc barbarian gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls when making a charge, but takes a –4 penalty to AC. These values replace the normal bonus and penalty accorded to a charging character.

This benefit replaces the standard barbarian's uncanny dodge ability. If the barbarian would later gain improved uncanny dodge as a barbarian class feature, he gains uncanny dodge instead.

Insightful Rage (Ex): While raging, a half-orc barbarian of 5th level or higher gains a +4 bonus on Will saves to disbelieve illusion spells.

This benefit replaces the standard barbarian's improved uncanny dodge ability.

Two-Handed Strike (Ex): The half-orc barbarian focuses his combat talents toward massive, two-handed melee weapons. At 7th level, the half-orc barbarian gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls with any two-handed melee weapon.

This benefit replaces the standard barbarian's damage reduction 1/— gained at 7th level. From this point forward, the half-orc barbarian's damage reduction is treated as one point less than the noted value (1/— at 10th level, 2/— at 13th level, and so forth).

Table 6–5: Half-Orc Barbarian Racial Subsitution Levels

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Reckless charge
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Insightful rage
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Two-handed strike

HALF-ORC DRUID

While most orcs revere their primary deity, Gruumsh, others are drawn to the primal brutality of nature. Half-orc druids are noted for their brute strength and force of will, summoning animals that are more powerful than normal and fighting with impressive physical prowess.

Hit Die: d10.

Requirements

To take a half-orc druid substitution level, a character must be a half-orc about to take her 1st, 4th, or 6th level of druid.

Class Skills

Half-orc druid substitution levels have the class skills of the standard druid class, plus Intimidate.

Table 6–6: Half-Orc Druid Racial Subsitution Levels

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Tough animal companion, nature sense, wild empathy	As standard druid
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bully animal	As standard druid
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Augmented nature's allies	As standard druid

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are features of the half-orc druid racial substitution levels.

Tough Animal Companion (Ex): The half-orc druid tends to attract physically powerful specimens. Her animal companion gains Toughness as a bonus feat.

Bully Animal (Ex): Beginning at 4th level, when the half-orc druid uses her wild empathy ability, she adds her Strength modifier to the check instead of her Charisma modifier.

This benefit replaces the sxtandard druid's resist nature's lure ability.

Augmented Nature's Allies (Su): Starting at 6th level, any animal summoned by a half-orc druid with a *summon nature's ally* spell gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution. These bonuses don't stack with those granted by the Augment Summoning feat.

This benefit replaces the standard druid's ability to use wild shape one additional time per day. From this point on, the half-orc druid's number of daily wild shapes is reduced by one (2/day at 7th level, 3/day at 10th level, and so on).

HALF-ORC PALADIN

At first glance, the concept of a half-orc paladin seems a contradiction in terms. But those rare half-orcs with the necessary dedication to law and goodness become the most zealous protectors of righteousness.

Hit Die: d12.

Requirements

To take a half-orc paladin substitution level, a character must be a half-orc about to take his 1st, 3rd, or 6th level of paladin.

Class Skills

Half-orc paladin substitution levels have the class skills of the standard paladin class, except that Diplomacy is dropped and Intimidate is added.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier (or four times this number as a beginning character).

Class Features

All the following are features of the half-orc paladin racial substitution levels.

Righteous Fury (Ex): A half-orc paladin can fly into a fury of righteous fervor once per day, dealing powerful blows to his enemies. Entering a righteous fury is a free action. While in a righteous fury, the half-orc paladin gains a +2 morale bonus on melee weapon damage rolls. This bonus increases by 1 for every four class levels, to +3 at 4th level, +4 at 8th level, up to a maximum of +7 at 20th level. The half-orc remains in this fury for 1 round plus 1 round per point of Charisma bonus (minimum 1 round).

At 5th level, and at every five class levels thereafter, the half-orc paladin may enter this righteous fury one additional time per day.

This benefit replaces the standard paladin's smite evil ability. A half-orc paladin who selects this substitution feature never gains any daily uses of smite evil.

Aura of Awe (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, a half-orc paladin is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). In addition, evil creatures within 10 feet of the character take a –2 penalty on saves against fear effects (or on checks made to resist his Intimidate attempts).

This substitution feature replaces the base paladin's aura of courage ability.

Remove Fatigue (Sp): At 6th level, a half-orc paladin can remove the fatigued condition from all allies within a 30-foot burst centered on him. (This has no effect on exhausted allies.) He can use this ability one additional time per week for every three levels after 6th (twice per week at 9th, three times per week at 12th, and so forth).

This benefit replaces the standard paladin's *remove disease* ability. A half-orc paladin who selects this substitution feature never gains any weekly uses of *remove disease*.

Table 6–7: Half-Orc Paladin Racial Subsitution Levels

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Aura of good, *detect evil*, righteous fury 1/day	As standard paladin
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Aura of awe, divine health	As standard paladin
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	*Remove fatigue* 1/week	As standard paladin

Illus. by C. Lukacs

As social creatures, the races of destiny create spells that focus on community life. Those aware of their special role in the world also craft unique magic that can reshape the flow of fate itself. The following spells and magic items offer new choices for spellcasters and nonspellcasters alike.

SWIFT AND IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

The *Miniatures Handbook* introduced the concept of a new action type: the swift action. Likewise, the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* introduced another new action type: the immediate action. These two game concepts are not restricted to miniatures play or psionics and can be utilized in a regular D&D roleplaying game. Some of the feats, spells, or items in *Races of Destiny* and future Dungeons & Dragons supplements use these concepts. A description of how they work follows.

Swift Action: A swift action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than a free action. You can perform one swift action per turn without affecting your ability to perform other actions. In that regard, a swift action is like a free action. However, you can perform only a single swift action per turn, regardless of what other actions you take. You can take a swift action any time you would normally be allowed to take a free action. Swift actions usually involve spellcasting or the activation of magic items; many characters (especially those who don't cast spells) never have an opportunity to take a swift action.

Casting a quickened spell is a swift action (instead of a free action, as stated in the Quicken Spell feat description in the *Player's Handbook*). In addition, casting any spell with a casting time of 1 swift action (such as *choose destiny*) is a swift action.

Casting a spell with a casting time of 1 swift action does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Immediate Action: Much like a swift action, an immediate action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than a free action. However, unlike a swift action, an immediate action can be performed at any time—even if it's not your turn. Casting *feather fall* is an immediate action (instead of a free action, as stated in the spell description in the *Player's Handbook*), since the spell can be cast at any time.

Using an immediate action on your turn is the same as using a swift action, and counts as your swift action for that turn. You cannot use another immediate action or a swift action until after your next turn if you have used an immediate action when it is not currently your turn (effectively, using an immediate action before your turn is equivalent to using your swift action for the coming turn). You also cannot use an immediate action if you are flat-footed.

NEW SPELLS

The following spells are common among humans, half-elves, and half-orcs. Spellcasters from other races may have discovered them as well.

ASSASSIN SPELLS

1st-Level Assassin Spell

Rooftop Strider: Move across uneven surfaces with ease.

BARD SPELLS

1st-Level Bard Spells

Discern Bloodline: Know the race of one creature/level.

Friendly Face: Gain +5 bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

Locate City: Find nearest city.

Scholar's Touch: Read books in seconds.

2nd-Level Bard Spells

Insignia of Alarm[F]**:** Alert bearers of special insignia.

Proud Arrogance: Targets gain +4 bonus on saves against charm, compulsion, and fear.

3rd-Level Bard Spells

Insignia of Healing[F]**:** Bearers of special insignia healed 1d8 damage +1 point/level (max +10)

Winding Alleys: Trap foe in phantasmal maze.

4th-Level Bard Spells

Charm Person, Mass: As *charm person*, but all within 30 feet.

6th-Level Bard Spells

Bestow Curse, Greater: As *bestow curse*, but more severe penalties.

City Stride: Teleport between two cities.

CLERIC SPELLS

1st-Level Cleric Spells

Omen of Peril[F]**:** You know how dangerous the future will be.

Scholar's Touch: Read books in seconds.

2nd-Level Cleric Spell

Insignia of Alarm[F]**:** Alert bearers of special insignia.

3rd-Level Cleric Spells

Delay Death: Losing hit points doesn't kill subject.

Insignia of Blessing[F]**:** Bearers of special insignia gain +1 bonus on attacks and saves against fear.

Insignia of Healing[F]**:** Bearers of special insignia healed of 1d8 damage +1 point/level (max. +10).

Insignia of Warding[F]**:** Bearers of special insignia gain +1 to AC, Fortitude saves.

5th-Level Cleric Spell

Stalwart Pact[X]**:** Target gains combat bonuses automatically when reduced to half hit points or lower.

7th-Level Cleric Spell

Bestow Curse, Greater: As *bestow curse*, but more severe penalties.

CITY DOMAIN

Deities: Olidammara, Urbanus (see page 18).

Granted Power: Add Gather Information and Knowledge (local) to your list of cleric class skills.

USING NEW DOMAINS IN A CAMPAIGN SETTING

If you choose to introduce one or both of the new domains featured in this book to a published campaign setting, the following deities are suggested.

Forgotten Realms: Gond (City), Haela Brightaxe (Destiny), Horus-Re (Destiny), Mask (City), Savras (Destiny), Waukeen (City). These deities are described in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Eberron: Boldrei (City), The Undying Court (Destiny). These deities are described in the *Eberron Campaign Setting*.

In general, deities whose portfolios include trade, wealth, or community may offer the City domain (unless the deity is closely associated with rural life). Nonhuman deities very rarely offer the City domain. Those whose portfolios include fate, heroism, or predestination may offer the Destiny domain to their clerics (deities of luck or good fortune typically offer the Luck domain instead, though some offer both). The Destiny domain is most closely associated with nonchaotic deities.

City Domain Spells

1 **Rooftop Strider:** Move across uneven surfaces with ease.
2 **City Lights:** Absorb nearby light to release as blinding flare.
3 **Winding Alleys:** Trap foe in phantasmal maze.
4 **Commune with City:** Learn about city.
5 **Skyline Runner:** You can walk normally on any city surface.
6 **City Stride:** Teleport between two cities.
7 **Urban Shield:** City grants cover to you, not to enemies.
8 **City's Might:** Gain enhancement to Str and Con, damage reduction, while in city.
9 **Animate City:** City structures attack, slow down enemies.

DESTINY DOMAIN

Deities: Heironeous, Glautru (see page 75), Istus (see *Complete Divine*), Lyris (see *Complete Warrior*), Vecna, Zarus (see page 19).

Granted Power: Once per day as an immediate action, you can grant a willing creature within 30 feet the ability to reroll an attack, save, ability check, or skill check. You must be able to see the creature to be affected. You cannot use this power on yourself. This is a supernatural ability.

Destiny Domain Spells

1 **Omen of Peril**[F]: You know how dangerous the future will be.
2 **Augury**[MF]: Learns whether an action will be good or bad.
3 **Delay Death:** Losing hit points doesn't kill subject.
4 **Bestow Curse:** –6 to an ability score; –4 to attack rolls, saves, and checks; or 50% chance of losing each action.
5 **Stalwart Pact**[X]: Target gains combat bonuses automatically when reduced to half hit points or lower.
6 **Warp Destiny:** Reverse failed save or hit in combat.
7 **Bestow Curse, Greater:** As bestow curse, but more severe penalties.
8 **Moment of Prescience:** You gain insight bonus on single attack roll, check, or save.
9 **Choose Destiny:** Gain two chances for success on every action.

DRUID SPELLS

1st-Level Druid Spell

Omen of Peril[F]: You know how dangerous the future will be.

PALADIN SPELLS

2nd-Level Paladin Spell

Insignia of Alarm[F]: Alert bearers of special insignia.

3rd-Level Paladin Spells

Insignia of Blessing[F]: Bearers of special insignia gain +1 bonus on attack rolls and saves against fear.
Insignia of Warding[F]: Bearers of special insignia gain +1 to AC, Fortitude saves.

RANGER SPELLS

1st-Level Ranger Spell

Locate City: Find nearest city.

SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

1st-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Div **Discern Bloodline:** Know the race of one creature/level.
Locate City: Find nearest city.
Scholar's Touch: Read books in seconds.
Illus **Friendly Face:** Gain +5 bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

2nd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Ench **Proud Arrogance:** Targets gain +4 bonus on saves against charm, compulsion, and fear.
Evoc **City Lights:** Absorb nearby light to release as blinding flare.

3rd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spell

Illus **Phantom Guardians:** Create illusion of group of guards.

4th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spell

Conj **Unseen Servant, Mass:** As *unseen servant* except creates one servant/level.

5th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Ench **Charm Person, Mass:** As *charm person,* but all within 30 feet.
Illus **Shadow Guardians:** Create group of shadowy warriors.

8th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spell

Trans **Bestow Curse, Greater:** As *bestow curse,* but more severe penalties.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

The spells on the following pages are presented in alphabetical order (with the exception of those whose names begin with "mass" or "greater"; see Order of Presentation, page 181 of the *Player's Handbook*).

ANIMATE CITY

Transmutation
Level: City 9
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: 60 ft.
Area: 60-ft.-radius emanation, centered on you
Duration: 1 min./level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The buildings and other structures of the city attack your enemies. Every round on your turn, every enemy within the spell's area is subject to one melee attack as if from a Gargantuan animated object (slam +15 melee, 2d8+10 damage). The animated city's attacks disregard cover and concealment (even invisibility is useless).

In addition, all enemies within the area of the spell move at half normal speed (regardless of their mode of movement). Damage dealt to the animated city structures has no effect.

You may cast this spell only when within a community at least as large as a small city (see page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

BESTOW CURSE, GREATER

Transmutation
Level: Bard 6, cleric 7, Destiny 7, sorcerer/wizard 8
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: Permanent
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

The spellcaster places a curse on the creature touched, choosing one of the three following effects:

- One ability score is reduced to 1, or two ability scores take –6 penalties (minimum 1).
- –8 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks.
- Each turn, the subject has a 25% chance to act normally; otherwise, he takes no action.

You may also invent your own curse, but it should be no more powerful than those described above, and the DM has final say on the curse's effect.

A *greater curse* cannot be dispelled, nor can it can be removed with a *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, or *remove curse* spell. A *miracle* or *wish* spell removes the *greater curse*, but each *greater curse* also must have a single means of removing it with some deed that the spellcaster designates. The deed must be something that the subject can accomplish within one year (assuming he undertakes it immediately). For example, the deed might be "slay the dragon under Castle Bluecraft," or "climb the tallest mountain in the world." The cursed victim can have help accomplishing the task.

CHARM PERSON, MASS

Enchantment (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Bard 4, sorcerer/wizard 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One or more creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell functions like *charm person*, except that *mass charm person* affects a number of creatures whose combined HD do not exceed twice your level, or at least one creature regardless of HD. If there are more potential targets than you can affect, you choose them one at a time until you choose a creature with too many HD.

CHOOSE DESTINY

Divination
Level: Destiny 9
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level

You gain a limited ability to discern a successful path for your actions. For the duration of the spell, any time you make an attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw, you may roll twice and select which die roll to use.

CITY LIGHTS

Evocation [Light]
Level: City 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: 60 ft.
Area: 60-ft.-radius burst
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fortitude partial
Spell Resistance: Yes

You temporarily absorb all nearby artificial light and release it as a flare. Any artificial light (including magical and mundane sources) flickers out momentarily, then a burst of light flares from you. All creatures within the area (except you) are blinded for 1 round if they fail a Fortitude save; regardless of the saving throws success, all creatures in the area are dazzled for 1 minute. Afterward, the lights return to normal. Sightless creatures are unaffected.

The spell only functions if at least four active artificial light sources (torches, lanterns, light spells, and so forth) are within 60 feet of the caster. The spell's name refers to its most common use (in well-lit city streets), but it can function in any area with sufficient lighting.

City lights counters or dispels any darkness spell of equal or lower level, such as *darkness*.

Material Component: A pinch of tinder.

CITY STRIDE

Conjuration (Teleportation)
Level: Bard 6, City 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Touch

Target: You and touched objects or touched willing creatures
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None and Will negates (object)
Spell Resistance: No and Yes (object)

This spell instantly transports you from one community to a second designated community. Each community must be at least as large as a small city (see page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The destination city may be as distant as 100 miles per caster level. Interplanar travel is not possible. You can bring along objects as long as their weight doesn't exceed your maximum load. You may also bring along one additional willing Medium or smaller creature (carrying gear or objects up to its maximum load) or its equivalent (see below) per three caster levels. A Large creature counts as two Medium creatures, a Huge creature counts as two Large creatures, and so forth. All creatures to be transported must be in contact with one another, and at least one of those creatures must be in contact with you. Only objects held or in use (attended) by another person receive saving throws and spell resistance.

You must have visited the destination city at some point in the past. You do not have precise control over your arrival point; you appear at a randomly determined safe location within the borders of the city (not within a building).

Material Component: A chip of city stone or brick from the selected destination.

CITY'S MIGHT

Transmutation
Level: City 8
Components: V, S, M, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level; see text

You draw upon a city and its inhabitants for additional strength. You gain an enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution, as well as damage reduction, based on the size of the community you are in (see page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Community Size	Str/Con Bonus	DR
Large town or smaller	+2	2/adamantine
Small city	+4	4/adamantine
Large city	+6	6/adamantine
Metropolis	+10	10/adamantine

If you are not within 100 feet of a community when the spell is cast, the spell has no effect. If you move more than 100 feet from the community before the duration elapses, the spell's effect ends immediately. For example, you could retain the effect while adventuring within the city's sewers, but heading to a dungeon a mile away would end the effect.

Material Component: A chip of city stone or brick.

COMMUNE WITH CITY

Divination
Level: City 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous

You become one with a community that you are in, attaining knowledge of the surrounding community. You instantly gain knowledge of as many as three facts from among the following subjects: the population of the community, the dominant race within the community and the percentage of the population it encompasses, any given race's percentage of the total population, the level of the highest-level character in a given class, the type and alignment of one of the community's power centers (if the community has more than one, roll randomly), a significant economic factor affecting trade within the city, or a major news item within the city (see Gather Information, page 74 of the *Player's Handbook*).

DELAY DEATH

Necromancy
Level: Cleric 3, Destiny 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Living creature touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The subject of this powerful spell is unable to die from hit point damage. While under the protection of this spell, the normal limit of –9 hit points before a character dies is extended without limit. A condition or spell that destroys enough of the subject's body to prohibit *raise dead* (such as a *disintegrate* effect) still kills the creature, as does death brought about by ability score damage or drain, level drain, or a death effect.

The spell does not prevent the subject from entering the dying state by dropping to –1 hit points. It merely prevents death as a result of hit point loss.

If the subject has fewer than –9 hit points when the spell's duration expires, he or she dies instantly.

DISCERN BLOODLINE

Divination
Level: Bard 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature per round
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster can instantly tell the race of the targeted individual, plus any inherited templates possessed by the target (such as celestial or half-dragon). Each round that the caster remains concentrating he can determine the race and inherited templates of another target.

Material Component: A drop of blood.

FRIENDLY FACE

Illusion (Glamer)
Level: Bard 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 10 min./level (D)

You subtly change your appearance so that it seems particularly friendly to the viewer. You gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made to influence or gain information from creatures with Intelligence scores of 3 or higher, as long as those creatures aren't already hostile toward you.

This spell does not alter your appearance in any significant way, and thus provides no bonus on Disguise checks.

INSIGNIA OF ALARM

Abjuration
Level: Bard 2, cleric 2, paladin 2
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Area: 400 ft. + 40 ft./level spread, centered on you
Target: All wearers of special insignia within range
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell alerts all wearers of a specific insignia (see below) within range. Such creatures hear a single mental "ping" (as the *alarm* spell, page 197 of the *Player's Handbook*) when this spell is cast.

This spell requires significant preparation. Before using this spell you must forge specially crafted insignias. These can be crafted in the form of amulets, badges, rings, or any similar object, but each one must bear the same logo, crest, or symbol. Each insignia costs 10 gp. Militias, guilds, or churches within a city use this spell to call all its members together.

Focus: A specially prepared insignia (see above).

INSIGNIA OF BLESSING

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Cleric 3, paladin 3
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Duration: 1 min./level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell functions just like *insignia of alarm* except that the insignia wearers are also filled with courage. Each insignia wearer gains a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and on saving throws against fear effects.

INSIGNIA OF HEALING

Conjuration (Healing)
Level: Bard 3, cleric 3
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will half (harmless); see text
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless); see text

This spell works just like *insignia of alarm* except the insignia wearers are instead healed by positive energy. The spell cures 1d8 points of damage +1 point per caster level (maximum +10) to all wearers of the insignia.

Since undead are powered by negative energy, this spell deals damage to them instead of curing their wounds. Any undead creature can apply spell resistance and attempt a Will save to take half damage.

INSIGNIA OF WARDING

Abjuration
Level: Cleric 3, paladin 3
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Duration: 1 min./level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell works just like *insignia of alarm* except the insignia wearers also gain a +1 divine bonus to AC and on Fortitude saves.

LOCATE CITY

Divination
Level: Bard 1, ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: 10 miles/level
Area: 10 miles/level radius circle, centered on you
Duration: Instantaneous

You sense the distance and direction to the nearest community of a minimum size designated by you at the time of casting. For instance, you could choose to find the nearest community at least as large as a village, or you could choose to locate only the nearest metropolis.

This spell measures the distance to the "nearest" community as the minimum distance one would have to travel to reach the city without moving through solid objects. Thus, a caster on the surface isn't likely to locate a subterranean city half a mile beneath his feet, even if the next closest community is 5 miles away overland.

OMEN OF PERIL

Divination
Level: Cleric 1, Destiny 1, druid 1
Components: V, F
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous

A brief supplication grants you a vision that hints at how dangerous the immediate future is likely to be. Based on an assessment of the caster's immediate surroundings and likely path of travel, the caster receives one of three visions: safety, peril, or great danger.

The base chance for receiving an accurate reply is 70% + 1% per caster level, to a maximum of 90%; the DM makes the roll secretly.

If the *omen of peril is* successful, you receive one of three fleeting visions:

- Safety: The caster isn't in any immediate danger. If he continues on his present course (or remains where he is if he's been stationary for some

time before casting the spell), he'll face no significant monsters, traps, or challenges for the next hour or so.
- Peril: The caster will face challenges typical of an adventure: challenging but not overwhelming monsters, dangerous traps, and other hazards for the next hour or so.
- Great danger: The caster's very life is at grave risk. He will likely face powerful NPCs or deadly traps in the next hour.

If the roll fails, you receive one of the other two results, determined randomly by the DM, and you don't necessarily know you failed because the DM rolls secretly.

Choosing which vision is "correct" takes some educated guesswork on the part of the DM, who should assess the party's likely courses of action and what dangers they're likely to face.

The form that an *omen of peril* takes depends on whether the caster worships a specific deity, venerates nature as a druid, or simply upholds abstract principles. A druid might see a white dove for safety, a dark cloud obscuring the sun for peril, and a forest fire for great danger. A cleric of Fharlanghn might see a vision of a straight road for safety, a crossroads for peril, and a washed-out bridge for great danger.

Unlike the more powerful *augury*, an *omen of peril* doesn't respond to a specific question. It only indicates the level of danger likely for the next hour, not what form the danger will take.

Focus: A set of marked sticks, bones, or similar tokens of at least 25 gp value.

PHANTOM GUARDIANS

Illusion (Figment)
Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Effect: One illusory figure/level
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will disbelief (if interacted with)
Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates the illusion of one or more Small or Medium figures of a chosen humanoid race. Each figure is effectively a *minor image*, and can appear dressed in any way the caster chooses. When the spell is cast, each figure is given a brief set of orders to follow for the spell's duration, such as "walk back and forth along that wall" or "stand by this gate." The orders can be different for each figure. These instructions can't be changed later. The illusory figures can't speak or react to their surroundings—they are typically used to scare off would-be intruders (as the spell's name suggests).

Material Component: A piece of charcoal.

PROUD ARROGANCE

Enchantment (Charm)
Level: Bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart
Duration: 1 min./level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell lets a group of creatures resist effects that convince them they should not be following their present course of action. The creatures affected gain a +4 resistance bonus on saves against charm, compulsion, and fear effects.

The *proud arrogance* spell only functions for creatures of the same race as the caster. In other words, a human wizard casting the spell can target only humans with it.

Material Component: A piece of polished brass.

ROOFTOP STRIDER

Transmutation
Level: Assassin 1, City 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 min./level

You can run across rooftops or similar uneven surfaces much more easily than normal. You gain a +5 competence bonus on Balance and Jump checks. You automatically succeed on all Jump checks to clear a horizontal distance of 5 feet or less. You do not need to make Balance checks for running or charging across a sloped surface.

Material Component: A chip of roof tile.

SCHOLAR'S TOUCH

Divination
Level: Bard 1, cleric 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Components: V, S, M, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: One book/round
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 round/level

With this spell you can touch a book or scroll and absorb the knowledge contained within as if you had just read it. This is equivalent to a solid reading but not deep study—the character does not gain perfect recall of the information, just whatever he would have gotten from reading it completely once. If you can't read the language of the source, the spell has no effect. This spell cannot be used to prepare spells or to cast magical scrolls, nor does it have any effect when reading a magical book (such as a *tome of understanding*).

Material Component: A scrap of parchment and a pinch of tinder.

Focus: A thin crystal disc.

SHADOW GUARDIANS

Illusion (Shadow)
Level: Sorcerer/wizard 5
Saving Throw: Will disbelief (if interacted with)

As *phantom guardians*, except that the figures are partially real. Each guardian has the statistics noted below (regardless of its actual size or appearance). In addition to the brief orders given to each new shadow guardian, the caster can give each guardian a simple trigger that causes it to attack, such as "attack anyone approaching within 30 feet" or "attack anyone not wearing these colors." The shadow guardians have no special visual acuity—invisibility, disguises, and the like can easily fool them.

The *shadow guardians* deal normal damage. Against a creature that recognizes a *shadow guardian* as an illusion, it deals only 50% normal damage.

Shadow Guardian: Medium construct; HD 4d8; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, weapon); AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 1.

SKYLINE RUNNER

Transmutation
Level: City 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 hour/level

You can walk normally on any city surface as if it were level ground. This includes perfectly vertical walls, glass windows, and even clothes-drying lines. Your movement speed remains unchanged, even when walking straight up a wall.

STALWART PACT

Evocation
Level: Cleric 5, Destiny 5
Components; V, S, DF, XP
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Touch
Target: Willing living creature touched
Duration: Permanent until triggered, then 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell allows the target to enter a binding agreement with a deity, who provides a measure of protection when the need is dire.

Once this spell is cast, the pact remains dormant until the target is reduced to fewer than half of her full normal hit points. The target immediately gains 5 temporary hit points per caster level, damage reduction 5/magic, and a +4 luck bonus on saving throws. The hit points, damage reduction, and saving throw bonus disappear when the spell ends.

XP Cost: 250 XP.

Illus. by M. Moore

UNSEEN SERVANT, MASS

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Sorcerer/wizard 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: One invisible, mindless, shapeless servant/level
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions as *unseen servant*, except that it creates multiple servants. It is most often used by arcane spellcasters to entertain large numbers of guests, or by adventuring spellcasters to gather up large treasure hoards in a short period of time.

Material Component: A ball of twine and wooden splinters.

URBAN SHIELD

Abjuration
Level: City 7
Components: V, S, M, DF
Casting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level

Winding alleys

Illus. by E. Cox

The city itself shields you from harm, leaning in to protect you with its walls, lampposts, and other structures. You gain cover (+4 bonus to AC, +2 bonus on Reflex saves) against all attacks and spells.

At the same time, the city reshapes itself to accommodate your attacks. Against your attacks and spells, enemies within the city never benefit from cover that would be gained from the walls, objects, or other parts of the city and its structures.

You must be within a community no smaller than a small city to cast this spell.

Material Component: A chip of stone or brick.

WARP DESTINY

Transmutation
Level: Destiny 6
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous

You reshape your personal fate to potentially avoid some tragic action, but the ripples caused in your destiny have unpleasant side effects for a brief period. After learning the result of a saving throw that you have rolled, you may cast this spell to reroll the save, but with an insight bonus equal to your caster level (maximum +20). Alternatively, if you are struck in combat you can apply the insight bonus to your AC against the attack (even if flat-footed); if your new AC exceeds the attack roll, the attack misses you.

Casting this spell has a side effect: until the start of your next turn, you take a –4 penalty on all saving throws and to your AC.

WINDING ALLEYS

Illusion (Phantasm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Bard 3, City 3
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject suddenly feels as if the walls of the city are closing in around him. If the subject fails a Will save, he believes he is trapped in a maze of narrow city alleys that twist and turn in circles. The subject remains in his current location, but is effectively stunned as long as the spell lasts. Each round at the end of his turn, the subject may attempt a DC 15 Intelligence check to escape the maze and end the effect. If the subject takes any damage, the spell immediately ends.

The spell must be cast in a community no smaller than a small town, otherwise it has no effect.

NEW PSIONIC POWERS

1st-Level Psion/Wilder Powers

Synchronicity: Ready an action and use it when you choose.

Urban Strider: Move across uneven surfaces or through crowds with ease.

2nd-Level Psion/Wilder Power

Anticipatory Strike: Take your action out of initiative order.

3rd-Level Psion/Wilder Power

Realized Potential: Target gains +1 on attacks and saves and +2 on trained skill checks.

1st-Level Psychic Warrior Power

Urban Strider: Move across uneven surfaces or through crowds with ease.

POWER DESCRIPTIONS

The psionic powers below are presented in alphabetical order.

ANTICIPATORY STRIKE

Psychoportation
Level: Psion/wilder 2
Display: Auditory
Manifesting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous
Power Points: 3

You take your normal action for the round at the time that you manifest this power, rather than waiting for your turn to come up in the initiative sequence. In subsequent rounds, your place in the initiative order does not change—you anticipate your action for this round only. You can take a standard action and a move action, or a full-round action, just as you could if you were taking your action at your normal place in initiative order. You can't activate this power if you're flat-footed, and you can't use the power a second time until after your next turn has passed.

For example, if you normally act on initiative count 15, you could use this power to take your turn again on initiative count 12, but this means that you wouldn't be able to act on the next round's initiative count 15 (since you've already used that turn's actions), and you wouldn't be able to use the power again until after your next turn (that is, after the next round's initiative count 15).

Augment: If you spend 2 additional power points, your place in the initiative order changes, much as if you had delayed (but you may move earlier in the initiative order rather than later).

REALIZED POTENTIAL

Clairsentience
Level: Psion/wilder 3
Display: Visual
Manifesting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)
Power Points: 5

The target receives a vision of her own future, gaining deeper insight into her abilities, but only temporarily. For the duration of this power, the character gains a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls and saving throws, and a +2 competence bonus on skill checks made using skills in which the character has purchased ranks.

SYNCHRONICITY

Clairsentience
Level: Psion/wilder 1
Display: Visual
Manifesting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round
Power Points: 1

You gain a brief glimpse into the future that allows you to arrange a coincidence of events. When you manifest this power, you can ready a standard action (without spending an action to do so) and use it whenever you choose during the next round. Unlike the normal use of readied actions, you need not specify the condition under which you will take your readied action. If you do not perform your readied action before your next turn, you lose that action.

Augment: If you spend 2 additional power points, you do not need to specify the standard action you are readying. In effect, you can take your normal move action and then take any standard action at some later point in the round, depending on how events unfold.

URBAN STRIDER

Psychometabolism
Level: Psion/wilder 1, psychic warrior 1
Display: Visual
Manifesting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 minute/level
Power Points: 1

You enhance your ability to move rapidly through city streets and across rooftops. You gain a +5 competence bonus on all Balance and Jump checks. You automatically succeed on all Jump checks to clear a horizontal distance of 5 feet or less. You do not need to make Balance checks for running or charging across a sloped surface. You can move at your full normal speed through crowds.

Augment: If you spend 8 additional power points, you can walk normally on any city surface as if it were level ground. This includes perfectly vertical walls, glass windows, and even clothes-drying lines. Your speed remains unchanged, even when walking straight up a wall.

Illus. by C. Lukacs

In campaigns where humans are the most populous of the races, basing an adventure among the lands of humanity works pretty much as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Humans are social creatures who prefer living in communities with others of their kind, although loners, homesteaders, and explorers who live far from the rest of their kind are common as well. This chapter provides advice on breathing more life and variety into the numerous communities that humans and their kind call home. Towns are broken down in to their component parts, letting the DM tailor each town to his liking. This chapter also provides numerous sample NPCs from a wide variety of challenge ratings, including several low-level but ubiquitous NPC classes that make up the bulk of human towns—aristocrats, commoners, experts, and warriors.

Chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* provides guidelines for randomly generating communities of various sizes and levels. In most cases, these rules work best when creating average communities, primarily dominated by humans and their kin. Provided here are rules for creating even more variety and detail in a given area or town.

The rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* reflect the fact that humans are the most common race living in cities. In addition, these towns try to emulate the pseudo-medieval feel of the genre, in which peasants work the land, millers make the flour, merchants haggle in the streets, and city guards keep an eye out for trouble.

However, there's nothing stopping you from altering the way in which humans, and the towns in which they live, operate. Terrain is a major factor in how towns come into being and evolve. A town located on an oasis in the middle of the desert, for instance, looks and acts differently from one in the foothills of a lofty mountain range. Your imagination is the limit when it comes to deciding how an exotic human culture would construct its town.

ELEMENTS OF A TOWN

Humans and their kind are noted for living in close-knit communities. Most cultures create permanent communities that combine houses, shops, places of worship, inns, and all the other structures that one would expect.

Larger settlements are divided up into neighborhoods, or districts, that cater to a particular segment of the population, trade, racial group, or some other division. In general, a town boasts one district per 1,000 people in its population (thus,

communities smaller than a small town do not have separate districts). For each 1,000 people in a town, roll on Table 8–1 below to determine what sort of districts exist. You can deal with duplicate rolls in one of three ways. First, you may choose to reroll duplicate or inappropriate rolls. Second, duplicate rolls presume that the town has a much larger district of that type for its size. Third, duplicate rolls may indicate that the town has multiple districts of the same type, located in different parts of town. For instance, if you roll foreign district three times, you may decide that the town hosts three different foreign cultures.

If the same result comes up three or more times, assume that the town is famous for a given kind of district and probably derives a major portion of the town's economy from that district. Each of these kinds of districts can appear in any sort of town, regardless of alignment or power center, with some exceptions. If the town's power center is magical (see Power Center for the Community, page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), then at least one of the districts must be either a temple or wizard district (depending on the type of power center).

Because most people live close to (or in) the same place that they work, it should be assumed that each district has an adequate number of houses or living quarters, along with individual shops, food stalls, inns, and services that cater to the population. In general, 50% to 70% of any settlement is devoted to residential buildings. The size and composition of a particular district is up to the DM. In addition, feel free to add additional types of districts that you feel appropriate, such as docks or wharfs (which have been left out to keep the table as generic as possible).

Each district described below includes a list of sample encounters that are likely to occur when the adventurers are present. For more information, see Urban Encounters, page 101 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

One of many busy streets in the arcane district

Table 8–1: Kinds of Districts

d%	District	Urban Encounter Check Modifier
01–10	Arcane district	+1
11–20	Artisan district	+0
21–30	Foreign district	+1
31–40	Merchant district	+1
41–50	Military district	+1
51–60	Noble district	–1
61–70	Racial district	+1
71–80	Temple district	–1
81–90	Thieves district	+2
91–100	University district	–1

Arcane District: This district holds a high concentration of adepts, sorcerers, wizards, and alchemists. Stores filled with material components for spells line the streets and magic items are sold to those with the money to pay for them. To the untrained eye, arcane districts may be indistinguishable from university districts, since many arcane districts host schools and academies that teach the art of magic. If the town has a magical power center, the arcane district will typically be the most powerful district within its walls.

Typical Encounters: Duel/mageduel in progress, prominent personage, spell gone awry.

Artisan Quarter: This quarter boasts the majority of the town's blacksmiths, cobblers, wheelwrights, and other craftsfolk who make the community's goods. In smaller settlements, artisans sell their wares directly from their shops, while larger cities may allow artisans to move their goods to the merchant district (see below) for sale. Artisans are typically divided up even further into guilds—groups of likeminded craftsfolk who set defined prices for goods in relation to labor.

Typical Encounters: Construction accident, contest in progress, employment offer, found item, guard harassment, overturned/runaway cart, robbery in progress.

Foreign District: The foreign district is normally only found in the larger settlements (typically small cities or larger) or in smaller towns that interact with a foreign people. The district is fully integrated in the society, but retains a distinct cultural flavor that is notably different from the town that hosts it. In the largest of cities (large city or metropolis), newcomers to the city frequently find their way to the foreign district of their homeland and are "encouraged" to live there if the group they belong to is not held in high regard.

In smaller cities, a foreign district may be indistinguishable from a racial district, especially if one racial group is more prevalent than others. Most foreign districts, however, cater to a specific human society, with its own language (or dialect), customs, foods, and, in some cases, laws.

Typical Encounters: Brawl/street fight/gang war in progress, bullies, contest in progress, guard harassment, mistaken identity, muggers, spectacle.

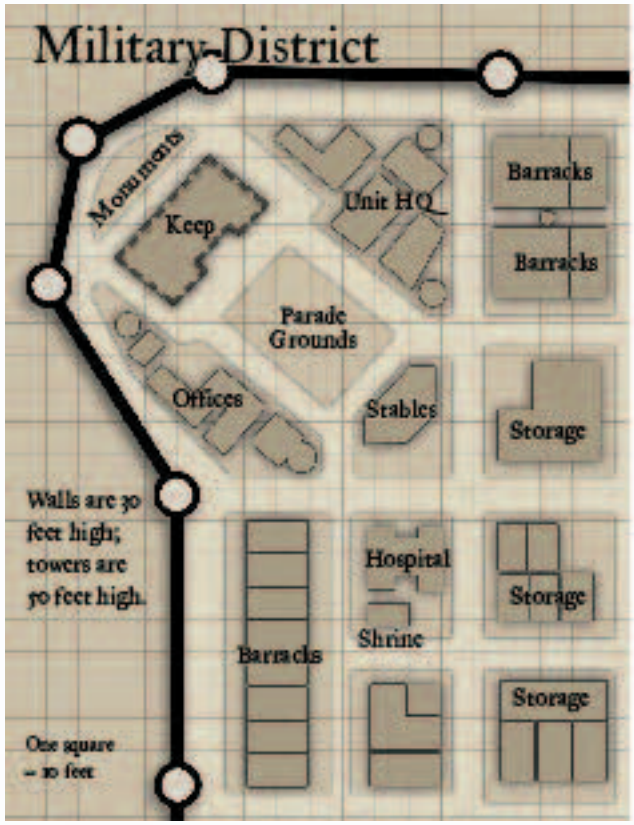
Merchant District: The merchant district is filled with stores, shops, and bazaars, owned by sellers who hawk all manner of goods. This area is usually thronging with people during the day and virtually vacant at night, with patrols of city guard and private watchmen keeping vandals and petty thieves from causing too much mayhem. In smaller cities, the merchant district is indistinguishable from the artisan district, with craftsfolk selling their goods from the stalls and shops in which the products are made.

Typical Encounters: Animal, bullies, employment offer, fire, found item, guards need help, lost child, muggers, pickpockets, robbery in progress, spectacle, spell gone awry.

Military District: The military district is the site of a large fort, castle, keep, armory, parade ground, and other structures dedicated to supporting the town's militia or army. These districts are commonly walled off, even within the city proper, and designed with defense in mind. This district has a much higher percentage of city guards and soldiers, although the exact amount depends on the size of the military in the town. Strangers and those without a good reason to be in the area are actively discouraged from entering it.

Typical Encounters: Admirer, construction accident, duel/mageduel in progress, employment offer, escaped prisoner, guard harassment, guards need help, spectacle.

Noble District: The noble district is filled with the homes of the town's elite. The houses in this area are large



Illus. by M. Phillippi

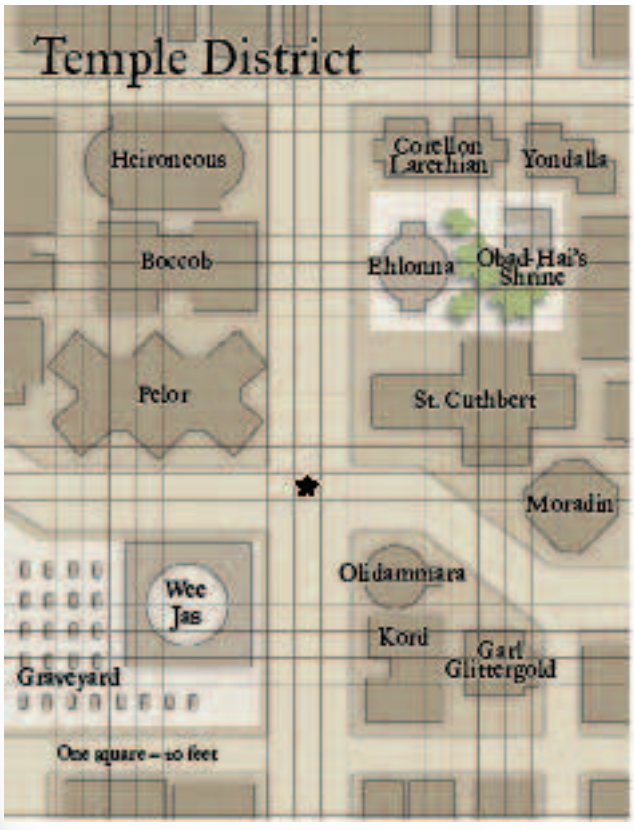
and well furnished, and the area is filled with restaurants, shops selling fine and exotic wares, theaters, and other places that cater to the upper classes. This district is typically well patrolled, especially at night, with double the usual number of city guards.

Typical Encounters: Contest in progress, employment offer, found item, guard harassment, mistaken identity, monster, muggers, pickpockets, prominent personage, robbery in progress, spectacle, spell gone awry.

Racial District: Similar to foreign districts, racial districts are areas that hold a large concentration of one particular race, such as elves, gnomes, or dwarves. This district encompasses many of the elements of all the districts described here, with a sampling of temples, merchants, artisans and the like, all focusing on the particular demands and tastes of the race in question. A racial district typically has unusual architecture that ensures its buildings stand out from the buildings surrounding the district. If racial tensions are high in the community, racial districts may feel more like armed encampments, with strangers getting the cold shoulder or worse.

Typical Encounters: Brawl/street fight/gang war in progress, bullies, contest in progress, guard harassment, mistaken identity, muggers, spectacle.

Temple District: The temple district hosts a large number of temples, churches, and places of worship. Depending on the town, the temple district may hold a wide variety of faiths, or a large number of temples of varying size dedicated to a single deity. Many of these temples serve as seminaries where students can learn the wisdom of their faith. As expected, the temple district has a much higher percentage of clerics (and adepts or druids) than the rest of the city.



Typical Encounters: Admirer, brawl/street fight/gang war in progress, bullies, contest in progress, employment offer, guard harassment, lost child, mistaken identity, prominent personage, spectacle, spell gone awry.

Thieves District: The thieves district boasts the majority of the town's brothels, taverns, and other places of ill repute. All manner of illegal activities may be found here, including gambling, prostitution, stolen goods, and the like. As the name denotes, thieves, pickpockets, con men, and criminals of all sorts walk the streets looking for easy prey. A prosperous or flourishing thieves district may simply indicate that the town is much more open and liberal in its interpretation of entertainment, catering to the vices of the people in the name of commerce.

Typical Encounters: Animal, brawl/street fight/gang war in progress, bullies, construction accident, contest in progress, corpse, duel/mageduel in progress, employment offer, escaped prisoner, fire, found item, guard harassment, mistaken identity, monster, muggers, overturned/runaway cart, pickpockets, robbery in progress, spell gone awry.

University District: The university district holds several places of higher learning, as well as libraries, scribe services, and academies. In smaller cities, the university district may be considered part of or affiliated with the temple district (focusing on theology) or the arcane district (with a focus on arcana and esoteric lore).

Typical Encounters: Admirer, contest in progress, employment offer, found item, lost child, mistaken identity, pickpockets, prominent personage, spectacle, spell gone awry.

District Prosperity

As not all towns are created equal, neither are individual districts within a city. To determine the economic status of a particular district, roll on Table 8–2 below.

Table 8–2: District Prosperity

d10	District Prosperity
1	Terrible
2–3	Struggling
4–7	Average
8–9	Prosperous
10	Flourishing

Terrible: The district is in utter disrepair, completely destitute, or entirely riddled with crime and corruption. Buildings are either abandoned or in serious need of repair and only fools would venture out onto the streets at night. Businesses in this district carry a pathetic range of goods or cater only to hard-luck cases or criminals.

In the cases of areas that are normally not associated with such conditions, you can assume that a calamity has stricken

the district. For example, rolling the "terrible" result for a noble district may indicate that some sort of social upheaval has taken place, with a majority of the houses being looted and burned by the masses.

Struggling: The district is undergoing an economic downturn, suffers from graft and corruption, or has a general lack of qualified people to run its primary business. Thieves and criminals are common in these districts, although they keep their activities relatively covert to avoid the occasional city guard or private mercenary forces that sometimes wander the streets.

Average: The district is normal in most respects, producing typical volumes of goods (or whatever is appropriate) and is neither particularly rich nor poor. Goods and services can be found for the prices listed in the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Crime is at an average level and most inhabitants are not too worried, but try not to find themselves alone in an alleyway at night.

Prosperous: The district is particularly well off and boasts fine buildings, a healthy income (as per the city's general income), and a respected (or infamous) reputation. Arcane, temple, and university districts are well known for their education, merchant districts have a fine array of goods for sale, and artisan districts produce excellent goods that fetch a handsome price. In the case of seedier districts, such as thieves districts, the area is probably under the thrall of organized crime, which imposes its own rules and justice, keeping the streets (relatively) safe so that the average rube may be parted with his money at a faster pace. A prosperous district is a good indicator of the primary industry or service that the town provides.

Flourishing: The district is extremely successful, wildly popular, or undergoing some sort of boom. Noble districts are noted for their extravagant wealth, foreign districts have a powerful sway on the city's government and culture, and military districts feature well-stocked and well-funded fortresses full of soldiers and armaments, indicating the military's influence on the populace. A flourishing district is one of the main attributes that defines a town.

COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES

While the *Dungeon Master's Guide* provides rules for generating random towns, it still leaves several important aspects open to interpretation. The following tables provide beneficial and negative attributes that can give the town its own unique flavor, as well as generating ideas for adventures. You can either choose to give a community an attribute or roll randomly for the result.

Table 8–3: Attributes

d%	Type of Attribute
01–20	Negative attribute
21–80	No attribute
81–100	Positive attribute

Table 8–4: Random Beneficial Community Attributes

d%	Beneficial Attribute
01–05	Artist haven
06–15	Blessed
16–25	Center of learning
26–35	Cosmopolitan society
36–45	Economic boom
46–55	Innovative breakthrough
56–65	Magically advanced
66–75	Military stronghold
76–80	Pilgrimage destination
81–90	Tourist destination
91–100	Trade center

Table 8–5: Random Negative Community Attributes

d%	Negative Attribute
01–10	Crime wave
11–20	Cursed
21–30	Economically depressed
31–40	Famine
41–45	Magically repressed
46–55	Military coup
56–60	Plague ravaged
61–70	Racial tension
71–80	Religious tension
81–90	Severe seasons
91–100	War ravaged

Beneficial Attributes

These attributes represent events or improvements that have a positive effect on the general populace.

Artist Haven: The community has a larger percentage of artists, performers, and craftsfolk who produce fine quality artwork. Characters gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Perform checks as well as Craft checks that produce items of beauty and art, thanks to the open-minded and supportive populace.

If large enough, the town has at least one artisan, merchant, or foreign district.

Blessed: The community has received a blessing from a positive and beneficial deity. Crops are plentiful, and food costs 1d6×10% less than the price listed in the *Player's Handbook*. The default NPC attitude toward strangers is friendly, unless the strangers are obviously hostile (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Center of Learning: The community has a multitude of organizations and buildings dedicated to higher learning. The populace has a higher rate of literacy than the norm, as well as a greater percentage of wizards, sorcerers, and clerics. Books and scrolls (including magical ones) are available at a 1d3×10% reduced rate.

If large enough, the town has at least one arcane, temple, or university district, or a combination of all three.

Cosmopolitan Society: The town's population is particularly diverse and well integrated, inspiring an influx of new ideas, open-mindedness, and tolerance toward strangers. The town is automatically an integrated racial mix (see Racial Demographics, page 139 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The default NPC attitude toward anyone

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For many performers, an audience of one is enough

is indifferent (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*), regardless of race, creed, or religion. This applies even if the neighboring locale has a different attitude toward any given race, creed, or religion.

If large enough, the town has at least one foreign or racial district.

Economic Boom: The community is undergoing an upsurge in its economy, due to enhanced trade, demand for goods, or savvy brokering by its merchants. The amount of ready cash in the community increases to its full gp limit × 1/10 its population.

Innovative Breakthrough: The town has discovered some new technology, technique, or long-forgotten craft that provides a boon to one particular aspect of the community. For instance, the town has recently created a printing press that allows mass production of texts, or a magical technique that gives boosts to healing magic. This breakthrough has not yet made its way known to the rest of the world and may be a jealously guarded secret.

If large enough, the town has at least one arcane, artisan, or temple district.

Magically Advanced: The town has a higher number of spellcasters than normal, some of whom have discovered new magical techniques, or the community is situated in a place that is magically active. Any time an arcane spell is cast, there is a 5% chance that the spell is treated as if the caster level were one level higher.

If large enough, the town includes at least one arcane or temple district.

Military Stronghold: The town has a particularly large, well-stocked, and well-trained standing militia or army. The town boasts at least one armory, fort, or other defensive building in excellent condition. Weapons and armor, including magical ones, can be purchased for 1d3×10% less than the prices listed in the *Player's Handbook* or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

If large enough, the town has at least one military district.

Pilgrimage Destination: The town is a sacred spot or hosts a religious festival that draws the faithful from distant lands. While the town may have temples to other deities, the town is dedicated to one in particular. The town boasts a particularly venerated location such as a temple, the site of a martyr's death, or a statue of a saint. The default NPC attitude toward members of the faith is friendly, and unfriendly toward members of an opposing faith (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*).

If large enough, the town has at least one temple district.

Tourist Destination: The town sits in an area of natural beauty, has a curious monument or festival, or some other attribute that draws tourists from far and wide to see it. The town draws most of its income from catering to the tourists and sightseers who come to visit, boasting more inns, taverns, and shops than the norm. The gp limit of the town increases by one category (see Generating Towns, page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

If large enough, the town includes at least one foreign or thieves' district.

Trade Center: The town is a center for trade in the region and has large stockpiles of goods for sale. The amount of ready cash in the community increases to 3/4 its gp limit × 1/10 its population. In addition, choose three different types of goods, such as weapons, armor, foodstuffs, textiles, or other broad categories. The cost for purchasing those types of items is reduced by 1d3×10%.

If large enough, the town has at least one artisan or merchant district.

Negative Attributes

These attributes represent elements that have a negative effect on the general populace.

Crime Wave: The town is under the grip of a terrible crime wave due to organized crime, roving bandits, or simply an anarchic society. Citizens are wary about going out at night and are immediately suspicious of strangers. The default NPC attitude is unfriendly (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Cursed: The town has been afflicted with a terrible curse, causing great misfortune and woe. The effects of the curse is up to the DM; here are some suggestions:

- All male children die before the age of 3.
- Those who do not give offerings to a particular well fall ill and perish within a month.
- The townsfolk have fallen prey to lycanthropy, which seems to manifest without warning.
- On the first day of the new year, the townsfolk are overcome with bloodlust, attacking anyone who does not live in the village.

Economically Depressed: Due to severed trade routes, poor business decisions, or the loss of the primary source of income, the town is undergoing a severe economic depression. The amount of ready cash in the community decreases to one-quarter its gp limit × 1/10 its population. All goods increase in price by 2d10×10%.

Famine: Due to poor weather, war, drought, flood, or other bad fortune, there is not enough food in the town to sustain the population. Foodstuffs increase in price by 2d10×10%, if they are available at all. Most or all the populace is suffering the effects of starvation (see Starvation and Thirst, page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Magically Repressed: Arcane spellcasters are regarded with deep suspicion and distrust in this town. The default attitude toward arcane spellcasters is unfriendly (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). Optionally, the town sits in an area in which magic works erratically, with spells failing 10% of time.

Military Coup: A coup has occurred in the town, which is now under the control of an oppressive military regime. Heavily armed soldiers roam the streets. Every able-bodied man is being conscripted into the military, dissidents are being rounded up, and commodities, such as weapons, armor, and foodstuffs, have been commandeered. The soldier in charge is the highest-level fighter in the community. Adventurers must either join the military or be considered potential enemies of the state.

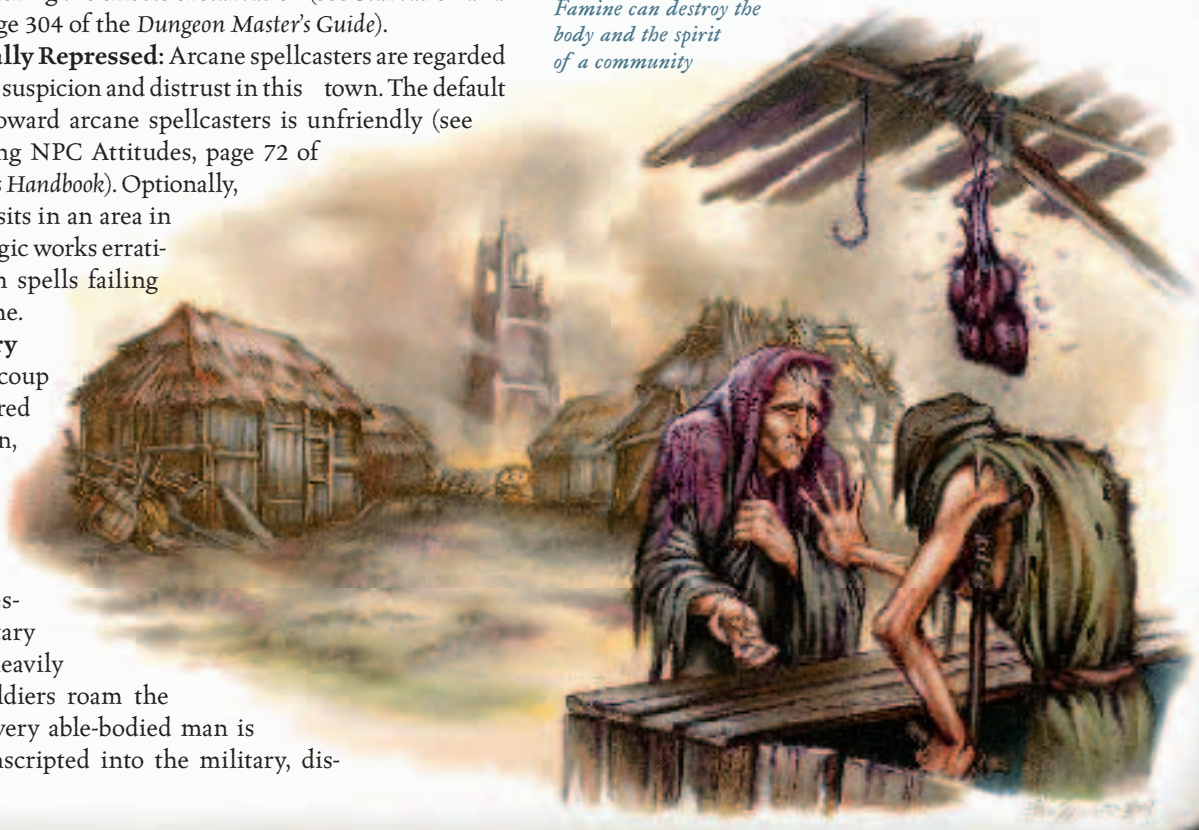
Plague Ravaged: A deadly disease is running rampant throughout the town. Choose one of the following contact or inhaled diseases: cackle fever, mindfire, shakes, or slimy doom (see Disease, page 292 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*); 1d8×10% of the population is infected with this disease. As a result, most of the populace remains indoors and away from strangers. There is a 50% chance that the local military has quarantined the town, limiting or denying access both into and out of the afflicted area.

Racial Tension: The town is mired in deep tension between two or more races of its population. The default attitude between these races is unfriendly or hostile (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). Harsh words and segregation are the norm, along with beatings, lynchings, and clashes in the street.

Religious Tension: A deep religious divide affects the town, either between two different religions or a schism occurring within the dominant faith of the community. Characters of one of the chosen beliefs (or sect of a single belief) are readily accepted by those of the same creed, but will be expected to denounce rival factions.

Severe Seasons: The seasons in the region have produced harsh and unpredictable weather, disrupting farming and causing all manner of problems. The type of weather depends on the terrain and temperature of the

Famine can destroy the body and the spirit of a community



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location of town—heat wave, torrential rains, unseasonable cold, or some other adverse weather. Food supplies are low, increasing the price by 1d10×10%, and at least 10% of the populace is suffering the effects of starvation or thirst (see Starvation and Thirst, page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

War Ravaged: The community has been devastated by war. The outer buildings of the town have been burned or seriously damaged, major infrastructure is in disrepair, and a shortage of basic services and food grips the community. The population has been reduced by one category for its size. For instance, a large town has the population of a small town, although this number does not drop below the population of a hamlet (which will have its base population reduced by half). All goods that have not been looted increase in price by 2d6×10%. The populace is extremely wary and guarded against strangers. The default NPC attitude is unfriendly (see Influencing NPC Attitudes, page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*), increasing to hostile toward anyone affiliated with the offending government, race, or other group that attacked the town.

CITYFOLK

More than any other race, humans and their ilk are associated with cities. Those who choose to reside in cities prefer more people than they can count all around them, speaking every language known and a few that aren't. They enjoy seeing new sights, hearing new sounds, and encountering new ideas and tools—all without leaving the comfort of home. They hate the smell of manure and grass or the quiet of an open field. They feel oddly vulnerable when no one else is around, and insignificant if they can see the entire night sky at once. Strength is in numbers, and comfort lies in thick walls and close-grouped buildings.

These are the cityfolk. The term was first used by farmers and villagers to describe people who lived in large cities. The term originated as an insult, implying that people who had no sense and no skill and could not live on their own or make an honest living from their own toil. But the city-dwellers heard the term and were delighted by it. After all, it describes them perfectly. They have different jobs, different skills, different interests and origins, but all share one trait—they all live in the city, and wouldn't live anywhere else.

OCCUPATIONS

Cityfolk normally fall into one of four occupation categories: laborers, craftsfolk, professionals, and merchants.

Laborers occupy the lowest rung on the economic ladder. These hard-working individuals keep society flowing by hauling goods through town, cleaning the streets, toiling in workshops, and the like. They eke out a living making a handful of silver pieces per week.

Craftsfolk create boots, weapons, doorknobs, and anything else their neighbors need (or at least want to buy). They may be builders, repairing old houses and constructing new ones. They may be alchemists, brewing strange concoctions in dark alleyway shops. Depending on their craft and talent, they may take in anything from a few silver pieces to several gold pieces per day, and they occupy the lower-middle to middle class.

The broad category of professionals includes sages, bards, barristers, animal trainers, healers, teachers, priests, and even warriors-for-hire. These individuals sell their own skills rather than creating products for purchase. Like craftsfolk, their income varies dramatically based on their

SAMPLE TOWN AND DISTRICTS—PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Here's an example of how to use the information provided here to create a unique town, complete with a general idea of its component parts.

Presented here is the community of Blackwell. After rolling on the tables provided in Generating Towns, page 137 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* the DM determines that the town has the following attributes.

Blackwell (Large Town): Conventional; NG; 3,000 gp; Assets 600,000 gp; Population 4,000 (79% human, 9% halfling, 5% elf, 3% dwarf, 2% gnome, 1% half-elf, 1% half-orc).

The town has four distinct districts (one district per 1,000 people). The DM rolls four times on Table 8–1: Kinds of Districts, and the results include a merchant district, a temple district, and two thieves' districts. The DM decides to combine the two thieves districts, creating a single particularly large district.

Rolling on Table 8–2: District Prosperity, the DM determines that the merchant district is of average prosperity, the temple district struggling, and the thieves' district prosperous.

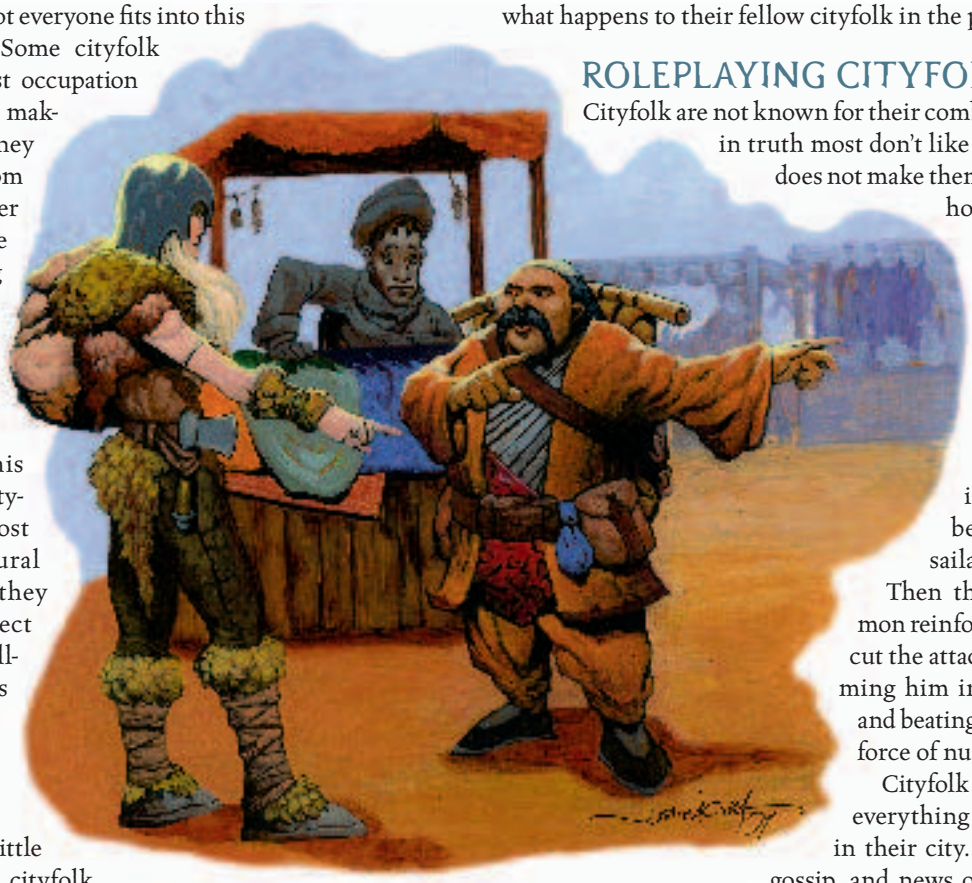
A roll on Table 8–3: Attributes determines that the town has a negative attribute, and a roll on Table 8–5: Negative Attributes reveals that the town is currently in the grip of severe seasons, with food prices increased by a staggering 30%.

Armed with this information, the DM can now put explanations to what's happening to the city. The severe seasons have disrupted agriculture in the area, forcing the town to survive by importing food from other areas. The merchant area is doing as well as it can (producing average wealth by compensating for less food volume by increasing prices). While the town has always had a large, dangerous thieves' quarter, it is doing particularly well these days, probably due to a thriving black market, racketeering schemes, and the despair of the community contributing to more drinking, gambling, and other illicit forms of entertainment. The town's temple district is struggling, which the DM chalks up to the populace's disgust with the local clergy not being able to deal with the problem and a lack of faith in the deities. Temples have fewer attendees, buildings are going without repairs, and clerics are treated with much less respect in this hard-luck town.

skill set, but they usually occupy the middle to upper class of the city.

The category of merchants includes all those who make their living overseeing the exchange of goods that they don't themselves create. Merchants buy from rural farmers, craftsfolk, and professionals and sell to those willing to pay the right price. They survive on the profits they make on each sale. Merchants are the ultimate manifestation of the city, existing only to put product and customer together in an efficient manner. Successful merchants make up a large portion of the middle class of the city.

Of course, not everyone fits into this nice picture. Some cityfolk have no honest occupation at all, instead making their money by taking from others, whether they beg in the streets, mug travelers, steal from people's homes, or charge protection from craftsfolk. This category of cityfolk is the most loathed by rural types, since they have no respect for those unwilling to do a day's honest work.



For humans of different cultures, language is often the largest barrier

SOCIAL STATUS

Lineage is of little importance to cityfolk, except as a source for stories. Adventurers like cityfolk's willingness to accept anyone into their circle. Who you were before you arrived does not matter, nor does what you did. All that matters is that you are there now, and what you can do for the city as a whole. Can you offer something the city wants or needs? If so, you're welcome. If not, you either find something you can do, or you move on to a new community.

Since parentage does not matter, cityfolk use a different measure to determine rank: property. This can mean land, goods, or money, but the cityfolk with the most property are considered civic leaders. Everyone wants to earn more property, and so they turn to these leaders for advice. Since civic leaders hold the most property, they are also most concerned with the welfare of the city. They organize their fellow cityfolk to stamp out crime, expand marketplaces, plant new parks, build new homes, and anything else that needs doing. In cities where an official city council exists, most of the civic leaders have seats on it. For cities without such a structure, they operate as an unofficial council, and anyone who ignores their suggestions soon learns that the civic leaders hold the real power within city limits. They can stop shipments to someone's store, refuse to buy a company's goods, and suggest that students no longer take a teacher's classes. A respected leader can "encourage" people to do what he thinks is best. Fortunately, the civic leaders really do want what's best for the city—they just don't always care what happens to their fellow cityfolk in the process.

ROLEPLAYING CITYFOLK

Cityfolk are not known for their combat skills, and in truth most don't like to fight. That does not make them easy targets, however. They know their home city better than anyone and can disappear down an alley or over a wall or into a crowd before an assailant can blink. Then they can summon reinforcements and cut the attacker off, hemming him in on all sides and beating him by sheer force of numbers.

Cityfolk want to know everything that goes on in their city. They love to gossip, and news of a stranger's arrival can travel faster than the person himself, particularly if he has money or could otherwise benefit the city. Some offer themselves as guides, both to show off their knowledge and to win favor with the newcomer. Cityfolk know every good tavern and inn in the city, and where to find anything one wishes to buy. They believe their behavior reflects on the city itself, so they do everything possible to be polite, friendly, and helpful.

It is common for cityfolk to spend their entire lives in one city. Those who leave almost always travel to other urban centers, seeking new opportunities. Some move on because their old city had too many practicers of a particular profession, and they look for a city that can offer them more work. Others amass their funds and move to a new, smaller city so they can be men of property there and become instant

Illus. by J. Miracola

civic leaders. Rarely do cityfolk leave for a small village or an isolated farmhouse. The city is in their blood, and cityfolk cannot live without it.

SAMPLE NPCS

The following NPCs include the individuals who the player characters are likely to interact with, and they should make it easier for you, as the DM, to design and run adventures set in the various human lands.

The NPCs detailed here span most levels of play and fill the standard archetypes of most human-centric lands. Although the NPCs described here have good or neutral alignments, you can use them as foes by simply changing the alignments and alignment-related abilities (such as cleric domains).

SAMPLE HUMAN NPCS

The following human NPCs are representative of important or ubiquitous roles in human society. This section provides examples of the basic fabric of human society, including warriors, guards, bandits, merchants, peasants, aristocrats, court wizards, and the like. Some of these NPCs are not heroic, but represent the individuals who form the backbone of a given society.

Human Bandit (CR 1)

The human bandit is an opportunist, lying in wait along highways and little-traveled roads, looking for easy prey. If used as an ally, the bandit knows secret routes and the fastest way through heavily guarded areas. If used as an antagonist, the bandit is a common foe who uses hit-and-run tactics along with the threat of death to earn a living. The human bandit's statistics can also be used for tough street thugs.

Bandit: Male or female human warrior 2; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8 plus 3; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk or Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +3 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d6+1/×3, composite shortbow); SA —; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +2, Ride +3; Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Language: Common.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, light wooden shield, longsword, dagger, composite shortbow (+1 Str bonus) with 20 arrows.

Human Bureaucrat (CR 1)

The bureaucrat is a ubiquitous part of human society, keeping day-to-day activities moving and maintaining a protective layer between the rabble and the upper classes. The bureaucrat's statistics can also be applied to scribes, majordomos, judges, tax collectors, notaries, low-ranking administrators, and minor government officials.

Bureaucrat: Male or female human expert 2; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6–2; hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk or Full Atk +0 melee (1d4–1/19–20, dagger) or +1 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, dagger); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort –1, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Forgery +5, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +5, Profession (bureaucrat) +4, Sense Motive +6; Negotiator, Persuasive.

Languages: Common, one other (varies by region).

Possessions: Dagger, inkpen, 2 vials of ink, ledger or paper documents, courtier's outfit, signet ring, sealing wax.

Human Peasant (CR 1)

The human peasant is the farmer who tills the land, raises the livestock, and toils for his lord to make his living. You can use the statistics provided for any random townsfolk or farmer.

Peasant: Male or female human commoner 2; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d4–2; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk or Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, club); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort –1, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (any one) +3, Handle Animal +2, Listen +3, Profession (farmer) +6, Ride +3, Spot +3, Swim +3; Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession [farmer]).

Language: Common.

Possessions: Club, peasant's outfit.

Human City Guard (CR 2)

The city guard is a common sight in any community large enough to have a standing watch. A typical city guard, though well armed and armored, is used to dealing with drunks, thugs, and other belligerent but relatively harmless individuals. The city guard knows a great deal about the territory he patrols. When antagonized, the city guard fights with skill and the support of his numerous comrades.

City Guard: Male or female human warrior 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+3 plus 3; hp 23; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +6 melee (1d10+1/×3, masterwork glaive) or +4 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with masterwork glaive); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb –1, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +1, Jump –1, Ride +2, Swim –5; Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (glaive).

Language: Common.

Possessions: Breastplate, masterwork glaive, longsword, light crossbow with 20 bolts, traveler's outfit, pouch containing 2d6 gp and 2d10 sp.

Human Hunter (CR 2)

While peasants toil in the fields to produce food, the hunter stalks game in the forests and glens of the wilderness, providing meat for his community. In addition to being capable with a bow, the hunter is also familiar with his home territory and can be a stalwart guide or determined woodland defender.

Hunter: Male or female human warrior 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 17; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/×3, handaxe) or +4 ranged (1d6+1, throwing axe) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, shortbow); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Handle Animal +1, Listen +2, Spot +2, Survival +3, Swim +3; Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Track.

Language: Common.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, handaxe, throwing axe, shortbow with 20 arrows, traveler's outfit, bedroll, fishing net, hooded lantern, flask of oil, flint and steel, iron pot, waterskin, 5 days of trail rations, pouch containing 1d6 gp and 2d6 sp.

Human Merchant (CR 3)

The merchant is found anywhere, hawking wares on the streets, haggling in bazaars, or negotiating profitable ventures in back-room deals. The merchant is all about making money and shies away from violence.

Merchant: Male or female human expert 4; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6–4; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk or Full Atk +2 melee (1d4–1/19–20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, dagger); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +11, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +6 (+8 acting in character), Gather Information +8, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Profession (merchant) +7, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +6, Survival +0 (+2 in urban areas), Use Rope +2; Negotiator, Skill Focus (Appraise), Skill Focus (Diplomacy).

Languages: Common, one other (varies by region).

Possessions: Dagger (usually hidden in boot), traveler's outfit, pouch of 4d6 gp and 4d10 sp, pony, cart, valuable wares (worth 5d10×20 gp total).

Human Soldier (CR 4)

While the city guard is meant to enforce local law, the soldier takes the fight directly to the enemy. This NPC represents a seasoned member of the local militia or a soldier with several skirmishes under his belt.

Soldier: Male or female human warrior 5; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8+5 plus 3; hp 34; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. ; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk or Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +7 melee (1d4+2/19–20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d6+2, throwing axe) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +5; Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Language: Common.

Possessions: Masterwork breastplate, masterwork light steel shield, masterwork longsword, dagger, 2 throwing axes, light crossbow with 20 bolts, traveler's outfit, bedroll, flint and steel, waterskin, pouch containing 2d10 gp and 2d10 sp.

Human Master Blacksmith (CR 5)

The master blacksmith is a trained craftsperson and an important member of any community. In addition to possessing a valuable and lucrative skill, the master blacksmith is commonly a member of the local militia and comes to the aid of the townsfolk when called.

Master Blacksmith: Male or female human expert 6; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6 plus 3; hp 26; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk or Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, light hammer) or +3 ranged (1d4+2, light hammer); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 9, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +9 (+11 for metal items), Craft (blacksmithing) +12, Intimidate +8, Listen +12, Profession (blacksmith) +10, Ride +8, Spot +12; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Craft [blacksmithing]), Toughness.

Language: Common.

Possessions: Leather armor, two masterwork light hammers, masterwork artisan's tools, pouch containing 3d4 gp and 2d4 sp.

Human Curate (CR 7)

Standing as a cornerstone of the community, the curate is a respected member of the local faith, giving aid where needed and tending to the spiritual necessities of his flock. In a small community, he may be the head of the local church; in a city, he might merely be one of the many faithful. He is willing to stand up for his beliefs and protect the weak against danger and injustice. If introduced as an ally, the curate provides healing magic and substantial martial prowess, along with the support of his congregation. As a foe, the curate can bring righteous vengeance down upon nonbelievers.

Human Curate: Male or female human cleric 7; CR 7: Medium humanoid; HD 7d8+14; hp 49; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk or Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+1, masterwork heavy mace) or +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day (+3, 2d6+7, 7th), spells; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +7; Ref +1; Will +10; Str 13, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +6, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Spellcraft

+7; Brew Potion, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Language: Common.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (caster level 7th): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light, mending, read magic*; 1st—*bless, detect evil, divine favor, protection from chaos*[DL], *protection from evil*[G], *sanctuary* (DC 14); 2nd—*aid*[D], *augury, calm emotions* (DC 15), *cure moderate wounds, spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds, magic circle against chaos*[DL], *prayer, searing light* (+4 ranged touch); 4th—*divination, holy smite*[DG] (DC 17).

D: Domain spell. *Domains*: Good (cast good spells [G] at +1 caster level); Law (cast law spells [L] at +1 caster level).

Possessions: *+1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield*, masterwork heavy mace, light crossbow with 10 bolts, *ring of protection +1, wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges), 2 scrolls of *bless*, 2 scrolls of *cure light wounds*, 2 scrolls of *divine favor.*

Human Commander (CR 8)

The human commander is either the leader of a platoon of soldiers, or is a lieutenant within a much larger army. She is a formidable opponent and can bolster her troops to acts of valor.

Human Commander: Male or female human fighter 8; CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 8d10+16 plus 3; hp 65; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +14 melee (1d8+6/×3, *+1 battleaxe*) or +9 ranged (1d8+3/19–20, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+6/×3, *+1 battleaxe*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8+3/19–20, masterwork composite longbow); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +8; Ref +2; Will +1; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +13, Jump +5, Ride +13; Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe).

Languages: Common, one other (varies by region).

Possessions: *+1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 battleaxe*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 5 cold iron arrows, 15 arrows, *ring of protection +1.*

Human Court Wizard (CR 13)

The court wizard is an important member of a royal court or other ruling body. Although deeply enmeshed in politics and intrigue, the court wizard is also a powerful spellcaster who uses her abilities for the good of those she serves. As an ally, the court wizard can provide political clout as well as access to magic that might otherwise be forbidden, As an antagonist, the court wizard can bring magical assaults, as well as political power, down to bear.

Human Court Wizard: Male or female human wizard 13; CR 13: Medium humanoid; HD 13d4; hp 34; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6–1, masterwork quarterstaff) or +8 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d6–1, masterwork quarterstaff) or +8/+3 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger); SA spells; SQ familiar, familiar benefits (Alertness, empathic link, share spells), *scry* on familiar, speak with familiar; AL N; SV Fort +5; Ref +6; Will +10; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Concentration +16, Decipher Script +21, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (local) +21, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +21, Listen +5, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +23, Spot +5, Survival +1 (+3 in urban areas); Brew Potion[B], Craft Wondrous Item[B], Negotiator, Scribe Scroll[B], Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Spell Focus (enchantment), Still Spell.

Languages: Common, five others (varies by region).

Familiar: The court wizard's familiar is a snake. The familiar uses the better of its own and the court wizard's base save bonuses. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Familiar Benefits: The court wizard gains special benefits from having a familiar. This creature grants the court wizard a +3 bonus on Bluff checks (included).

Alertness (Ex): *The snake familiar grants its master Alertness as long as it is within 5 feet.

Empathic Link (Su): The court wizard can communicate telepathically with her snake familiar at a distance of up to 1 mile. The master has the same connection to an item or a place that the familiar does.

Share Spells (Su): The court wizard may have any spell she casts on herself also affect her snake familiar if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. She may also cast a spell a target of "You" on her familiar.

Wizard Spells Prepared (caster level 13th): 0—*daze* (DC 15), *detect magic, message, prestidigitation*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 17), *comprehend languages, disguise self, hypnotism* (DC 17), *magic missile, sleep* (DC 17); 2nd—*alter self, arcane lock, daze monster* (DC 18), *scorching ray* (+7 ranged touch), *touch of idiocy* (+5 melee touch); 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball* (DC 18), *fly, hold person* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 19); 4th—*charm monster* (DC 20), *confusion* (DC 20), *lesser globe of invulnerability, greater invisibility, scrying* (DC 20); 5th—*dominate person* (DC 21), *dream, hold monster* (DC 21), *prying eyes*; 6th—*chain lightning* (DC 21), *mass suggestion* (DC 22); 7th—*mass hold person* (DC 23).

Spellbook: as above plus 0—all; 1st—*protection from chaos, unseen servant*; 2nd—*detect thoughts, hypnotic pattern, locate object, misdirection, obscure object, Tasha's hideous uncontrollable laughter, whispering wind*; 3rd—*arcane sight, clairaudience/clairvoyance, deep slumber, heroism, illusory script, nondetection, rage, tongues*; 4th—*crushing despair, detect scrying, lesser geas, greater invisibility*; 5th—*feeblemind, mind fog, symbol of sleep*; 6th—*geas/quest, greater heroism, symbol of persuasion, true seeing*; 7th—*insanity, phase door, power word blind, symbol of stunning.*

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, masterwork dagger, *bracers of armor +3, ring of protection +2, amulet of natural*

armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, headband of intellect +2, necklace of fireballs (type 1), *potion of fox's cunning*, 4 scrolls of *charm person*, scroll of *confusion*, 2 scrolls of *detect thoughts*, 2 scrolls of *fox's cunning*, scroll of *hypnotism*, 2 scrolls of *lightning bolt*, scroll of *see invisible*, 2 scrolls of *sleep*, *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges), *wand of magic missile* (7th level; 50 charges), spellbook.

Snake Familiar: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 13; hp 17; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +0; Grp –11; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1 plus poison); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./ 0 ft.; SA poison; SQ deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, scent, share spells, speak with snakes, speak with master, spell resistance 18; SV Fort +4; Ref +7; Will +9; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Weapon Finesse.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): The snake can deliver touch spells for the court wizard (see Familiars, page 52 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Improved Evasion (Ex): If the snake familiar is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Poison (Ex): A viper snake has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con (DC 10 Fort save).

Speak with Master (Ex): The snake familiar can communicate verbally with the court wizard. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

Human Noble (CR 14)

The noble is a high-standing member of the aristocracy, possibly representing a powerful duke or even a king who leads his troops to battle. He is as adept on the battlefield as he is in dealing with the machinations of the court.

Human Noble: Male or female human aristocrat 6/fighter 9; CR 14; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6 plus 9d10; hp 73; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +13; Grp +15; Atk +20 melee (1d6+6/15–20, +2 *keen rapier*) or +19 ranged (1d8+4, +2 *composite longbow*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d6+6/15–20, +2 *keen rapier*) or +19/+14/+9 ranged (1d8+4, +2 *composite longbow*); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +8; Ref +9; Will +7; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Forgery +3, Gather Information +11, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +10, Listen +10, Ride +10, Sense Motive +6, Spot +12, Survival +1 (+3 in urban areas); Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Mounted Combat, Negotiator, Persuasive, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier).

Languages: Common, one other (varies by region).

Possessions: +2 *keen rapier*, +2 *composite longbow* (+2 Str bonus) with 20 cold iron arrows, +3 *chain shirt*, +1 *buckler*, *ring of protection +3*, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *cloak of Charisma +2*, *gloves of Dexterity +2*, *eyes of the eagle*, 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of fox's cunning*, warhorse.

SAMPLE HALF-ELF NPCS

While half-elves do not produce their own unique culture, they have some common archetypes that can be found almost anywhere. Where noted, they use the optional substitution class features presented in the Racial Substitution Levels section of Chapter 6.

Half-Elf Bravo (CR 3)

The half-elf bravo is a swaggering, arrogant thief or thug usually found in urban areas. The bravo occasionally acts alone, but usually teams up with others to distract or gang up on his quarry. The bravo definitely prefers fighting when he has the advantage and flees when an encounter goes wrong. If used as an ally, the bravo brings knowledge of the terrain as well as several allies. If used as an antagonist, the bravo uses his suave demeanor to lure easy prey.

Half-Elf Bravo: Male or female half-elf rogue 3; CR 3: Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d6; hp 13; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, half-elf traits, low-light vision, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL CN; SV Fort +2; Ref +6; Will +1 (+3 against enchantments); Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Bluff +6, Climb +1, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +4, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +5, Hide +6, Jump +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Survival –1 (+1 following tracks), Tumble +7; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Common, Elven, one other (varies by region).

Sneak Attack: The bravo does an extra 2d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. The bravo may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Evasion (Ex): If the bravo is exposed to any effect that normally allows him to attempt a Reflex saving throw for

half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Trapfinding (Ex): The bravo can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *cloak of resistance +1*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Half-Elf Urban Stalker (CR 5)

The half-elf urban stalker is a silent shadow, hunting down his prey in the back alleys and dingy streets of a major city. He's in tune with the rhythms of the city, including its "native" animals. If used as an ally, the urban stalker knows many hidden places and can find anyone, anywhere. If used as an opponent, the half-elf stalker hunts the adventurers, even in places they feel safe.

Half-Elf Urban Stalker: Male or female half-elf ranger 5; CR 5: Medium humanoid (elf); HD 5d8+5; hp 31; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5 Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+3/18–20, *+1 scimitar*) or +8 ranged (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork composite shortbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+3/18–20, *+1 scimitar*) or +7 melee (1d6+3/18–20, *+1 scimitar*) and +7 melee (1d4+1/18–20, masterwork kukri) or +8 ranged (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork composite shortbow); SA favored enemy elves +2, favored enemy humans +4, spells; SQ animal companion (dog), half-elf traits, low-light vision, street magic, wild empathy +7 (+3 magical beasts); AL N; SV Fort +6; Ref +7; Will +4 (+6 against enchantments); Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +4, Hide +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Ride +4, Search +2, Spot +9, Survival +6; Alertness, Endurance[B], Weapon Focus (scimitar), Urban Tracking[B], Two-Weapon Fighting[B].

Languages: Common, Elven.

Favored Enemy (Ex): The urban stalker gains a +4 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humans. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage.

Against elves, he gains a +2 bonus on these skill checks and on weapon damage rolls.

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Racial Substitution Levels: Half-elf ranger 1, half-elf ranger 4.

Street Magic: The urban stalker's spell list is modified due to his racial substitution levels. See page 158 for details.

Animal Companion: The urban stalker has a dog as an animal companion (see *Monster Manual*, page 271). The ranger and the dog enjoy the link and share spells special qualities.

Link (Ex): The urban stalker can handle the dog as a free action. He also gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding his dog.

Share Spells (Ex): The urban stalker may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his animal companion if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. The urban stalker may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on his animal companion.

Ranger Spells Prepared (caster level 2nd): 1st—*detect secret doors*.

Possessions: *+1 chain shirt*, *+1 scimitar*, masterwork kukri, masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cat's grace*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of jump*, 2 *potions of magic fang*.

Half-Elf Diplomat (CR 9)

Gifted with a silver tongue, the half-elf diplomat uses her skills to smooth over differences of opinion between two or more people or groups. The diplomat prefers words over combat, but can hold her own when a decision can't be reached with words alone. A half-elf diplomat can be a great boon as an ally, soothing ruffled feathers. As a foe, the half-elf diplomat can turn the tables against the adventurers, spreading lies and sowing discontent.

Half-Elf Diplomat: Male or female half-elf bard 6/cleric 3; CR 9: Medium humanoid (elf); HD 6d6–6 plus 3d8–3; hp 28; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+1/19–20, *+1 longsword*) or +8 ranged (1d4/19–20, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8+1/19–20, *+1 longsword*) or +8/+3 ranged (1d4/19–20, masterwork hand crossbow); SA spells, turn undead 7/day (+4, 2d6+7, 3rd); SQ bardic knowledge +7, bardic music 6/day (*command*, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, soothing voice) half-elf traits, low-light vision; AL CG; SV Fort +4; Ref +7; Will +12 (+14 against enchantments); Str 10, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Concentration +3, Decipher Script +5, Diplomacy +23, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Gather Information +14, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (geography +3), Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +5, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +6, Perform (oratory) +10, Search +4, Sense Motive +13, Spot +6, Tumble +5, Use Magic Device +5; Brew Potion, Iron Will, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy).

Languages: Common, Elven, one other (varies by region).

Bardic Music: Use bardic music six times per day. See the bard class features on page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Command (*Sp*): Issue a *command* (as the spell) to a creature within 30 feet. See the half-elf bard racial substitution levels on page 157.

Fascinate (*Sp*): Use music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with her.

Inspire Competence (*Su*): Use music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task.

Inspire Courage (*Su*): Use music or poetics to bolster her allies against fear and improve their combat abilities.

Soothing Voice (*Su*): Use Diplomacy to *calm emotions* (as the spell). See the half-elf bard racial substitution levels on page 157.

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Racial Substitution Levels: Half-elf bard 1, half-elf bard 6.

Bard Spells Known (3/4/3 per day; caster level 6th): 0—*daze* (DC 14), *light*, *lullaby* (DC 14), *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 15), *comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *silent image* (DC 15); 2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *enthrall* (DC 16), *tongues*.

Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 3rd): 0—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *purify food and drink*, *resistance*; 1st—*command* (DC 13), *detect evil*, *protection from evil*[G], *sanctuary*[D] (DC 13); 2nd—*aid*[D], *augury*, *calm emotions* (DC 14).

D: Domain spell. Domains: Good (cast good spells [G] at +1 caster level), Protection (protective ward grants +3 resistance bonus on next save, 1/day).

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, +1 *longsword*, masterwork hand crossbow with 20 bolts, *cloak of Charisma* +2, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, 2 *potion of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of eagle's splendor*, 2 *potions of remove fear*, 2 *potions of sanctuary*, 2 *potions of shield of faith* +2, masterwork lap harp.

Half-Elf Minstrel (CR 9)

The minstrel is well versed in poetry and music, spreading both joy and news wherever he goes. If used an antagonist, the minstrel can use gossip and intrigue to cast suspicion upon someone. As an ally, the minstrel brings hard-earned knowledge, a silver tongue, and social graces to a situation.

Half-Elf Minstrel: Male or female half-elf bard 9; CR 9: Medium humanoid (elf); HD 9d6+9; hp 43; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +1 *rapier*) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +1 *rapier*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA spells; SQ bardic knowledge +11, bardic music 9/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire greatness, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, *suggestion*), half-elf traits, low-light vision; AL CG; SV Fort +4; Ref +8; Will +5 (+7 against enchantments); Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +22, Disguise +10 (+12 acting), Gather Information +18, Intimidate +6, Jump +2, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Perform +21 (string instruments), Search +3, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +8, Spot +6, Tumble +9, Use Magic Item +7; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perform [string instruments]), Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Elven, two others (varies by region).

Bardic Music: Use bardic music nine times per day. See the bard class features on page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Countersong (*Su*): Use music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound.

Fascinate (*Sp*): Use music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with him.

Inspire Competence (*Su*): Use music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task.

Inspire Courage (*Su*): Use music or poetics to bolster his allies against fear and improve their combat abilities.

Inspire Greatness (*Su*): Use music or poetics to inspire greatness in yourself or an ally, granting his target extra fighting capability.

Suggestion (*Sp*): Use music or poetics to make a *suggestion* (as the spell) to a creature that he has already fascinated.

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Bard Spells Known (3/4/4/3 per day; caster level 9th): 0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *know direction*, *lullaby* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *read magic*; 1st—*cause fear* (DC 15), *charm person* (DC 15), *lesser confusion* (DC 15), *disguise self*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16), 3rd—*deep slumber* (DC 17), *dispel magic*, *invisibility sphere*.

Possessions: Mithral chain shirt, +1 *rapier*, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, 10 cold iron bolts, *cloak of Charisma* +2, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, masterwork shawm.

Half-Elf Flame Savant (CR 13)

The half-elf flame savant is a powerful spellcaster with a penchant for flashy, dangerous spells. If used as an ally, the flame savant can provide potent offensive capability. If an enemy, the flame savant harries foes with a blistering array of magical attacks.

Half-Elf Flame Savant: Male or female half-elf sorcerer 13; CR 13: Medium humanoid (elf); HD 13d4+13; hp 47; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6–1, *staff of fire*) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +5/+0 melee (1d6–1, *staff of fire*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA spells; SQ familiar, familiar benefits (Alertness, empathic link, share spells), half-elf traits, low-light

vision, *scry* on familiar; AL CN; SV Fort +5; Ref +6; Will +9 (+11 against enchantments); Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Gather Information +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +4, Search +1, Spellcraft +10, Spot +4 (+7 in bright light); Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration.

Languages: Common, Elven, one other (varies by region).

Half-Elf Traits: Half-elves have immunity to magic sleep effects. For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

Familiar: The flame savant's familiar is a hawk. The familiar uses the better of its own and the flame savant's base save bonuses. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Familiar Benefits: The flame savant gains special benefits from having a familiar. This creature grants the flame savant a +3 bonus on Spot checks made in bright light.

Alertness (Ex):* The hawk grants its master Alertness as long as it is within 5 feet.

Empathic Link (Su): The flame savant can communicate telepathically with his familiar at a distance of up to 1 mile. The master has the same connection to an item or a place that the familiar does.

Share Spells (Su): The flame savant may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his familiar if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. He may also cast a spell a target of "You" on his familiar.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/8/7/7/7/7/4 per day; caster level 13th): 0—*acid splash, dancing lights, daze* (DC 15), *flare* (DC 17), *light, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost* (+8 ranged touch), *touch of fatigue* (DC 15; +5 melee touch); 1st—*burning hands* (DC 18), *endure elements, magic missile, shield, Tenser's floating disk*; 2nd—*eagle's splendor, flaming sphere* (DC 19), *pyrotechnics, resist energy, scorching ray* (+8 ranged touch); 3rd—*daylight, fireball* (DC 20), *flame arrow, protection from energy*; 4th—*confusion* (DC 19), *fire shield*), *fire trap* (DC 19), *wall of fire*; 5th—*dominate person* (DC 20), *teleport, wall of force*; 6th—*Bigby's forceful hand, chain lightning* (DC 23).

Possessions: *Staff of fire* (50 charges), masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *cloak of Charisma +2, bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +1, wand of burning hands* (50 charges), *elixir of fire breath*, 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of eagle's splendor*, 2 scrolls of *burning hands*, scroll of *flaming sphere*, 2 scrolls of *shield*, 2 scrolls of *sleep*.

Hawk Familiar: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 13; hp 23; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +0; Grp –10; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d4–2, talons); Sa —; SQ deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, speak with hawks, speak with master, spell resistance 18; Face/Reach: 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +4; Ref +7; Will +10; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +14; Weapon Finesse.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): The hawk can deliver touch spells for the flame savant (see Familiars, page 52 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Improved Evasion (Ex): If the hawk is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Speak with Master (Ex): The hawk can communicate verbally with the flame savant. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

SAMPLE HALF-ORC NPCS

While half-orcs do not create their own unique culture, they have some common archetypes that can be found almost anywhere. Where noted, they use the optional substitution class features presented in the Racial Substitution Levels section of Chapter 6.

Half-Orc Thug (CR 2)

Crude but crafty, the half-orc thug provides brute strength with stealth, prowling alleys or the shade of roads. The thug can act alone, but is most commonly found with allies.

Half-Orc Thug: Male or female half-orc rogue 1/fighter 1; CR 2: Medium humanoid (orc); HD 1d6+1 plus 1d10+1; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d10+4, masterwork greatclub) or +4 ranged (1d6+3, masterwork throwing axe); SA sneak attack +1d6, SQ darkvision 60 ft., half-orc traits, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +4; Ref +5; Will +1; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Climb +7, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Spot +4; Power Attack, Stealthy.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Sneak Attack: The thug does an extra 1d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. The thug may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Half-Orc Traits: For all effects related to race, a half-orc is considered an orc.

Trapfinding (Ex): The thug can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more,

he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork greatclub, masterwork throwing axe, *cloak of resistance +1*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Half-Orc Wild One (CR 5)

The wild one understands the harsh laws of nature and can bend them to her will. As an ally, the wild one provides deep understanding of her wilderness home as well as powerful magic. As an antagonist, the wild one uses her magical talents, as well as her animal companions, to provide a consistent barrage of attacks.

Half-Orc Wild One: Male or female half-orc druid 5; CR 5: Medium humanoid (orc); HD 3d8+3 plus 2d10+2; hp 33; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1/×3, masterwork longspear) or +3 ranged (1d4+1, masterwork sling); SA spells; SQ bully animal, darkvision 60 ft., tougher animal companion (wolverine; link share spells), trackless step, wild empathy +8 (+4 magical beasts), *wild shape* 1/day; AL NE; SV Fort +7; Ref +2; Will +8; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +5, Spellcraft +4, Survival +7 (+9 in aboveground natural environments); Scribe Scroll, Track.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Bully Animal (Ex): The wild one adds her Strength bonus instead of her Charisma bonus on her wild empathy checks.

Half-Orc Traits: For all effects related to race, a half-orc is considered an orc.

Substitution Levels: Half-orc druid 1.

Wild Shape (Su): The wild one can change into a Small to Medium animal and back again, as per the *polymorph* spell. This ability lasts for 5 hours or until she changes back.

Tougher Animal Companion (Ex): The companion's abilities and characteristics are summarized below. The wild one and wolverine enjoy the link and share spells special qualities, and the wolverine gains Toughness as a bonus feat.

Link (Ex): The wild one can handle the wolverine as a free action. She also gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding her wolverine.

Share Spells (Ex): The wild one may have any spell she casts on herself also affect her animal companion if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. The wild one may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on her animal companion.

Druid Spells Prepared (caster level 5th): 0—*detect magic, flare* (DC 12), *know direction, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*charm animal* (DC 13), *entangle* (DC 13), *magic fang, magic stone*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, flaming sphere* (DC 14), *heat metal* (DC 14); 3rd—*contagion* (DC 15), *meld into stone, sleet storm*.

Possessions: Masterwork longspear, masterwork sling with 10 bullets, *+1 studded leather armor, cloak of resistance +1, potion of barkskin* (+3), *potion of cure serious wounds*, scroll of *bull's strength*, flask of alchemist's fire.

Wolverine Animal Companion: CR —; Medium magical beast; HD 3d8+12 plus 6; hp 31; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and –1 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA rage; SQ low-light vision, scent; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +7; Ref +5; Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness[B] (2), Track[B].

Rage (Ex): A wolverine that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage on its next turn until it or its opponent is dead. The following changes are in effect as long as the wolverine rages: hp increase by 6; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d6+2, bite); SV Fort +9, Will +4; Str 18, Con 23; Climb +12. The wolverine cannot end its rage voluntarily. At the end of the wolverine's rage, it is fatigued for the duration of the encounter.

Skills: Wolverines have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Half-Orc Berserker (CR 7)

When most humans think of half-orcs, the image of the half-orc berserker immediately comes to mind—hot tempered, crude, and a whirlwind in combat. The berserker may be found anywhere: in the heart of the wilderness leading a band of likeminded individuals, or making his way in the city, bewildered by its sights and sounds, smashing anything (and anyone) that he doesn't understand.

Half-Orc Berserker: Male or female half-orc barbarian 7; CR 7: Medium humanoid (orc); HD 7d12+7; hp 58; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (2d4+7, *+1 falchion*) or +10 ranged (1d8+3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (2d4+7, *+1 falchion*) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+3, masterwork composite longbow); SA rage 2/day, reckless charge, two-handed strike; SQ darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, half-orc traits, insightful rage, trap sense +2; AL CE; SV Fort +6; Ref +4; Will +3; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Intimidate +6, Jump +3, Listen +9, Survival +9; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Great Cleave.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Rage (Ex): Twice per day, the berserker can enter a state of fierce rage that lasts for 6 rounds. The following changes are in effect as long as he rages: hp increase by 14; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (2d4+10,

+1 *falchion*) or +10 ranged (1d8+3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d4+10, +1 *falchion*) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+3, masterwork composite longbow); SV Fort +8, Will +5; Str 21, Con 17; Climb +5, Jump +5. At the end of his rage, the berserker is fatigued for the duration of the encounter.

Reckless Charge (Su): The berserker gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls when making a charge, but takes a –4 penalty to AC. These values replace the normal bonus and penalty accorded to a charging character.

Two-Handed Strike (Ex): The berserker gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls with any two-handed weapon.

Half-Orc Traits: For all effects related to race, a half-orc is considered an orc.

Insightful Rage (Ex): While raging, the berserker gains a +4 bonus on Will saves to disbelieve illusion spells.

Substitution Levels: Half-orc barbarian 2, half-orc barbarian 5, half-orc barbarian 7.

Possessions: +1 *breastplate*, +1 *falchion*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *ring of protection +1*, 2 *potions of bull's strength*, 3 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Half-Orc Furious Fist (CR 9)

Trained to suppress his short temper, the half-orc furious fist is a high-kicking monk who moves like the wind and strikes like thunder. If used as an ally, the furious fist can provide prodigious fighting ability. If used as an antagonist, the furious fist may be the leader of a band of monks out to prove their mettle against the adventurers.

Half-Orc Furious Fist: Male or female half-orc monk 9; CR 9: Medium humanoid (orc); HD 9d8+9; hp 53; Init +2; Spd 60 ft.; AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d10+3, *ki* strike [magic]) or +10 melee (1d6+4, +1 *siangham*) or +9 ranged (1d6+4, +1 *javelin*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d10+3, *ki* strike [magic]) or +10/+5 melee (1d6+4, +1 *siangham*) or +9/+9/+4 melee (1d10+3, *ki* strike [magic]) or +10/+10/+5 (1d6+4, +1 *siangham*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d6+4, +1 *javelin*); SA flurry of blows, *ki* strike (magic); SQ darkvision 60 ft., half-orc traits, improved evasion, purity of body, slow fall 40 ft., still mind, wholeness of body; AL LN; SV Fort +8; Ref +9; Will +10; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 6

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +10, Hide +9, Jump +14, Tumble +14; Acrobatic, Deflect Arrows[B], Dodge, Improved Disarm[B], Improved Unarmed Strike[B], Mobility, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist[B].

Languages: Common, Orc.

Half-Orc Traits: For all effects related to race, a half-orc is considered an orc.

Improved Evasion (Ex): If the furious fist is exposed to any effect that normally allows him to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Purity of Body (Ex): Immune to all normal diseases. Magical and supernatural diseases still affect him.

Slow Fall (Ex): A monk within arm's reach of a wall can use it to slow his descent while falling. The furious fist takes damage as if the fall were 40 feet shorter than it actually is.

Still Mind (Ex): +2 bonus on saves against spells and effects of the enchantment school.

Wholeness of Body (Su): The furious fist can heal up to 18 hit points per day, and he can spread this healing out among several uses.

Possessions: +1 *siangham*, +1 *javelin*, 3 javelins, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *bracers of armor +1*, *ring of protection +1*, *cloak of resistance +1*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of jump*, 2 *potions of mage armor*, *potion of protection from chaos*.

Half-Orc Mob Leader (CR 13)

The half-orc mob leader is a brutal and ruthless commander of a mixed band of half-orcs and orcs or humans. If introduced as an ally, he is a powerful combatant on his own, aided by a coterie of able warriors. If used as an antagonist, the mob leader tries to draw out the strongest member of a group to challenge to one-on-one combat.

Mob Leader: Male half-orc barbarian 7/fighter 6; CR 13: Medium humanoid (orc); HD 7d12+14 plus 6d10+12; hp 110; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +13; Grp +18; Atk +20 melee (1d8+10, +1 *dire flail*) or +17 ranged (1d8+6, +2 *composite longbow*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+10, +1 *dire flail*) or +18/+13/+8 (1d8+8, +1 *dire flail*) and +18 melee (1d8+5, +1 *dire flail*) or +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+6, +2 *composite longbow*); SA rage 2/day, reckless charge; SQ damage reduction 1/—, darkvision 60 ft., half-orc traits, fast movement, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +14; Ref +8; Will +6; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Intimidate +13, Jump +5, Listen +5, Survival +6; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dire flail), Great Cleave, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Specialization (dire flail), Weapon Focus (dire flail).

Languages: Common, Orc.

Rage (Ex): Twice per day, the mob leader can enter a state of fierce rage that lasts for 7 rounds. The following changes are in effect as long as he rages: hp increase by 26; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Grp +20; Atk +22 melee (1d8+13, +1 *dire flail*) or +17 ranged (1d8+6, +2 *composite longbow*); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (1d8+13, +1 *dire flail*) or +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+10, +1 *dire flail*) and +20 (1d8+6, +1 *dire flail*) or +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+6, +2 *composite longbow*); SV Fort +16, Will +8; Str 24, Con 18; Climb +9, Jump +7. At the end of his rage, the half-orc mob leader is fatigued for the duration of the encounter.

Reckless Charge (Su): The mob leader gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls when making a charge, but takes a –4 penalty

to AC. These values replace the normal bonus and penalty accorded to a charging character.

Half-Orc Traits: For all effects related to race, a half-orc is considered an orc.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): The mob leader retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (he still loses his Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Substitution Levels: Half-orc barbarian 2.

Possessions: +1 light fortification full plate, +1/+1 dire flail, +2 composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) with 60 arrows, *gauntlets of ogre power, boots of Dexterity +2, quiver of Ehlonna, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +2, potion of cure light wounds.*

SAMPLE ILLUMIAN NPCS

Even in campaigns that include illumians, these mysterious individuals will not be encountered with the same frequency as the other races featured in this book. Here are a few archetypal characters for use in a campaign. For more sample illumians, see the Bloodwing Cabal members described in Chapter 3.

Illumian Cabal Guard (CR 4)

The cabal guard protects his cabal from dangers both without and within. He is trained in combat, but also has talents in scouting and stealth. Cabal guards can be encountered in the wild as well as in urban settings, even miles from his cabal's headquarters.

Illumian Cabal Guard: Male or female illumian ranger 2/fighter 2; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+2 plus 2d10+2; hp 27; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (2d6+1/19–20, greatsword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/×3, *+1 composite longbow*); Full Atk +6 melee (2d6+1/19–20, greatsword) or +7/+7 ranged (1d8+2/×3, *+1 composite longbow*); SA favored enemy aberrations +2; SQ glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils, shadow familiarity, wild empathy +3 (–1 magical beasts); AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +7, Hide +5, Listen +9, Move Silently +5, Ride +8, Spot +9, Survival +9; Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot[B], Track[B], Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Common, Illumian.

Favored Enemy (Ex): The cabal guard gains a +2 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against aberrations. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage.

Illumian Word (Su): The cabal guard's combination of power sigils provides him with the *hoonvaul* illumian word. However, he has no spell slots to expend.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Illumians interact strangely with symbol-based spells. See the illumian racial description in Chapter 3 for details.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit the cabal guard's head provide illumination equal to a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): The cabal guard's *hoon* power sigil grants a +2 bonus to the guard's Wisdom and Constitution checks and all Wisdom- and Constitution-based skill checks (included). The cabal guard's *vaul* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Charisma checks and all Charisma-based skill checks.

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): The cabal guard gains a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the Shadow descriptor.

Possessions: Masterwork breastplate, greatsword, *+1 composite longbow* (+1 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, 2 *potions of cure light wounds.*

Illumian Spy (CR 6)

The illumian spy specializes in the gathering or retrieval of knowledge, or contributes to illumian society by eliminating its enemies. Either way, he accomplishes his goal with paramount secrecy.

Illumian Spy: Male or female illumian rogue 5/sorcerer 1; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d6+5 plus 1d4+1; hp 28; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk or Full Atk +6 melee (2d4, masterwork spiked chain); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with masterwork spiked chain); SA sneak attack +3d6, spells; SQ evasion, familiar, familiar benefits (Alertness, empathic link, share spells), glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils, shadow familiarity, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +9, Disguise +13 (+15 acting), Gather Information +13, Hide +12, Intimidate +7, Jump +2, Listen +1, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +12, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +4, Spot +1, Tumble +10; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Subtle Sigil, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Illumian, one other (varies by region).

Sneak Attack (Ex): The spy does an extra 3d6 points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage applies to ranged attacks within 30 feet as well. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to critical hits are immune to sneak attacks. The spy may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with a sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Evasion (Ex): If the spy is exposed to any effect that normally allows an attempt at a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Illumians interact strangely with symbol-based spells. See the illumian racial description in Chapter 3 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): The spy's combination of power sigils provides him with the *vauluur* illumian word. He may expend a spell slot (but not a prepared spell) as a swift action to add 1d6 points of damage to sneak attack damage rolls for 1 round. He may use the ability twice per day.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit the spy's head provide illumination equal to a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils: The spy's *vaul* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Charisma checks and all Charisma-based skill checks (included). The spy's *uur* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Dexterity checks and a +2 bonus on Dexterity-based skill checks (included).

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): The spy gains a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the Shadow descriptor.

Trapfinding (Ex): The spy can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): The spy retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe (he still loses his Dexterity bonus if paralyzed or otherwise immobile).

Familiar: The spy's familiar is a cat. The familiar uses the better of its own and the spy's base save bonuses. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Familiar Benefits: The spy gains special benefits from having a familiar. This creature grants the illumian spy a +3 bonus on Move Silently checks (included in the above statistics).

Alertness (Ex): *The familiar grants its master Alertness as long as it is within 5 feet.

Empathic Link (Su): The spy can communicate telepathically with his familiar at a distance of up to 1 mile. The spy has the same connection to an item or a place that the familiar does.

Share Spells (Su): The spy may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his familiar if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. He may also cast a spell a target of "You" on his familiar.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/4 per day; caster level 1st): 0—*detect magic, light, mage hand, read magic*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 14), *disguise self.*

Possessions: Masterwork spiked chain, *wand of mage armor* (50 charges), *wand of magic missile* (3rd; 50 charges), scroll of *invisibility.*

Cat Familiar: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 6; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp –9; Atk +5 melee (1d2–4, claw) Full Atk +7 melee (1d2–4, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d3–4, bite); SA —; SQ improved evasion, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6; Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +6, Hide +14*, Jump +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse[B].

Improved Evasion (Ex): If the familiar is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Skills: Cats have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

Illumian Loremaster (CR 9)

The illumian loremaster is an archetypal student of the arcane arts among her people. A specialist in divination magic, the loremaster seeks to uncover hidden secrets, whether lost to the mists of time or sequestered by those who would prefer to keep such knowledge away from the illumian race.

Illumian Loremaster: Male or female illumian diviner 7/loremaster 2; CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d4+9; hp 36; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk or Full Atk +4 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork cold iron dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork cold iron dagger); SA spells; SQ familiar, familiar benefits (Alertness, empathic link, share spells), glyphic resonance, illumian word, lore +8, luminous sigils, power sigils, secret, shadow familiarity; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Decipher Script +16, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Listen +4, Spellcraft +18, Spot +4, Survival +2 (+4 on other planes, +4 to avoid hazards/getting lost); Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Scribe Scroll[B], Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Spell Focus (enchantment).

Languages: Common, Illumian, four others (varies by region).

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Illumians interact strangely with symbol-based spells. See the illumian racial description in Chapter 3 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): The loremaster's combination of power sigils provides her with the *naenkrau* illumian word. During the time when she prepares her spells, she may choose to leave a spell slot unfilled in order to add +1 to the save DCs of all her other spells of that level. She may leave up to two spell slots unfilled, and multiple unfilled slots don't stack.

Lore: This class feature functions like bardic knowledge, with the loremaster gaining a +8 on the check.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit the loremaster's head provide illumination equal to a candle. She can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): The loremaster's *krau* power sigil grants a +2 bonus to the loremaster's caster level (included). Her *naen* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Intelligence checks and all Intelligence-based skill checks (included).

Secret: The loremaster has learned the following secret: Instant Mastery (Decipher Script).

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): The loremaster gains a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the Shadow descriptor.

Familiar: The loremaster's familiar is a toad. The familiar uses the better of its own and the loremaster's base save bonuses. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Familiar Benefits: The loremaster gains special benefits from having a familiar. This creature grants the illumian loremaster +3 hit points (included in the above statistics).

Alertness (Ex): *The familiar grants its master Alertness as long as it is within 5 feet.

Empathic Link (Su): The loremaster can communicate telepathically with her familiar at a distance of up to 1 mile. The loremaster has the same connection to an item or a place that the familiar does.

Share Spells (Su): The loremaster may have any spell she casts on herself also affect her familiar if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. She may also cast a spell a target of "You" on her familiar.

Wizard (Diviner) Spells Prepared (caster level 9th; prohibited school necromancy): 0—*detect magic* (3), *read magic* (2); 1st—*charm person* (DC 17), *comprehend languages, identify, mage armor, magic missile, unseen servant*; 2nd—*detect thoughts* (3) (DC 16), *Melf's acid arrow* (2) (+4 ranged touch), *whispering wind*; 3rd—*arcane sight, clairaudience/clairvoyance, lightning bolt* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 20), one slot left unfilled; 4th—*charm monster* (DC 21), *lesser geas* (DC 21), *scrying* (DC 19), one slot left unfilled; 5th—*contact other plane, hold monster* (DC 21).

Spellbook: as above plus 0—all others except necromancy; 1st—*detect secret doors, detect undead, erase, protection from chaos, protection from evil*; 2nd—*arcane lock, knock, locate object, magic mouth, obscure object, touch of idiocy*; 3rd—*dispel magic, fly, magic circle against chaos, magic circle against evil, secret page, summon monster III, tongues*; 4th—*arcane eye, dimensional anchor, Leomund's secure shelter, locate creature, summon monster IV*; 5th—*Leomund's secret chest, Mordenkainen's private sanctum, lesser planar binding, sending, prying eyes, Rary's telepathic bond, teleport.*

Possessions: Masterwork cold iron dagger, *headband of intellect +2, ring of protection +1, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +2*, scroll of *greater dispel magic*, scroll of *break enchantment*, spellbook, silver mirror (for *scrying* spell).

Toad Familiar: CR —; Diminutive magical beast; HD 9; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 5 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp –13; Atk or Full Atk +8 melee (no damage); SA deliver touch spells; SQ amphibious, improved evasion, low-light vision, scent, speak with master, speak with toads; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 9; Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Hide +21, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): The toad can deliver touch spells for the loremaster (see Familiars, page 52 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Improved Evasion (Ex): If the familiar is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Skills: A toad's coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

Speak with Master (Ex): The familiar can communicate verbally with the loremaster. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

Speak with Toads (Ex): The familiar can communicate with amphibians. Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

Illumian Battle Sorcerer (CR 10)

While most illumian spellcasters choose the life of research and knowledge, some take a more active role in the protection of their society. The battle sorcerer delivers strike teams to hard-to-reach locales via *teleport*, and then supports those troops as battlefield artillery.

Illumian Battle Sorcerer: Male or female illumian sorcerer 10; CR 10; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d4+10; hp 36; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork cold iron dagger) or +8 ranged (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork cold iron dagger); SA spells; SQ familiar, familiar benefits (Alertness, empathic link, share spells), glyphic resonance, illumian word, luminous sigils, power sigils, shadow familiarity; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Concentration +16, Listen +4, Spellcraft +13, Spot +4; Combat Casting, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (evocation).

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Illumians interact strangely with symbol-based spells. See the illumian racial description in Chapter 3 for details.

Illumian Word (Su): The battle sorcerer's combination of power sigils provides him with the *uurhoon* illumian word. He may expend a spell slot (but not a prepared spell) as a swift action to gain an insight bonus equal to his Wisdom bonus (if any) on Reflex saves and his Dexterity bonus (if any) on caster level checks to overcome spell resistance. This effect lasts for 1 minute per level of the spell slot expended, and may be used twice per day.

Luminous Sigils (Su): The supernatural sigils that orbit the battle sorcerer's head provide illumination equal to a candle. He can make these sigils disappear as a standard action, but loses the sigils' benefits and can't use any special abilities granted by power sigils or illumian word while they're doused. Restoring the sigils to visibility is a free action.

Power Sigils (Su): The battle sorcerer's *uur* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Dexterity checks and all Dexterity-based skill checks (included). His *hoon* power sigil grants a +2 bonus on Wisdom and Constitution checks and all Wisdom- and Constitution-based skill checks (included).

Shadow Familiarity (Ex): The battle sorcerer gains a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the Shadow descriptor.

Familiar: The battle sorcerer's familiar is a raven. The familiar uses the better of its own and the battle sorcerer's base save bonuses. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Familiar Benefits: The battle sorcerer gains special benefits from having a familiar. This creature grants the battle sorcerer a +3 bonus on Appraise checks (included in the above statistics).

Alertness (Ex): *The familiar grants its master Alertness as long as it is within 5 feet.

Empathic Link (Su): The battle sorcerer can communicate telepathically with her familiar at a distance of up to 1 mile. The battle sorcerer has the same connection to an item or a place that the familiar does.

Share Spells (Su): The battle sorcerer may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his familiar if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. He may also cast a spell a target of "You" on his familiar.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/6/3 per day; caster level 10th): 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 14), *light, mage hand, message, open/close, read magic*; 1st—*burning hands* (DC 17), *mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, shield*; 2nd—*cat's grace, glitterdust* (DC 16), *invisibility, scorching ray* (+7 ranged touch); 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball* (DC 19), *fly*; 4th—*dimension door, ice storm*; 5th—*teleport*.

Possessions: Masterwork cold iron dagger, *cloak of Charisma +2, ring of protection +1, amulet of natural armor +1, wand of haste* (20 charges), scroll of *dismissal*, scroll of *wall of ice*.

Raven Familiar: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 10; hp 18; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +5; Grp –8; Atk or Full Atk +7 melee (1d2–5, claws); SA deliver touch spells; SQ improved evasion, low-light vision, scent, speak with master, speak with ravens; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10; Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Illumian.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): The raven can deliver touch spells for the battle sorcerer (see Familiars, page 52 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Improved Evasion (Ex): If the familiar is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage with a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Speak with Master (Ex): The familiar can communicate verbally with the battle sorcerer. Because the raven speaks Illumian, others can understand without the aid of magical help.

Speak with Birds (Ex): The familiar can communicate with birds. Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

ENCOUNTERS

Humans and their kin exist in a bewildering variety of groups. Some typical examples are provided below to springboard your own ideas. Each includes an average Encounter Level (EL) to help assess its threat.

Bandit Gang (EL 4): 1d6+2 human bandits.

City Guard Patrol (EL 4): 1d3+1 human city guards.

Hunting Party (EL 4): 1d3+1 human hunters.

Foreign Caravan (EL 6): 1d4 human merchants, 2d6+2 human soldiers.

Local Caravan (EL 6): 1d2 human merchants, 1d6+1 human soldiers, 2d6+2 human peasants.

Street Gang (EL 6): 1d6+2 human bandits, 1d2 half-elf bravos.

Mixed Bandit Gang (EL 7): 1d4 human bandits, 1d3+1 half-elf bravos, 1d3+1 half-orc thugs.

Illumian Strike Team (EL 8): 1d3+1 illumian cabal guards, 1 illumian spy.

Pilgrims (EL 8): 3d6 peasants, 1d2 human hunters, 1 human curate.

Border Patrol (EL 9): 2d6+4 human soldiers, 1 human commander.

Illumian Infiltration Team (EL 9): 1d3+1 illumian spies.

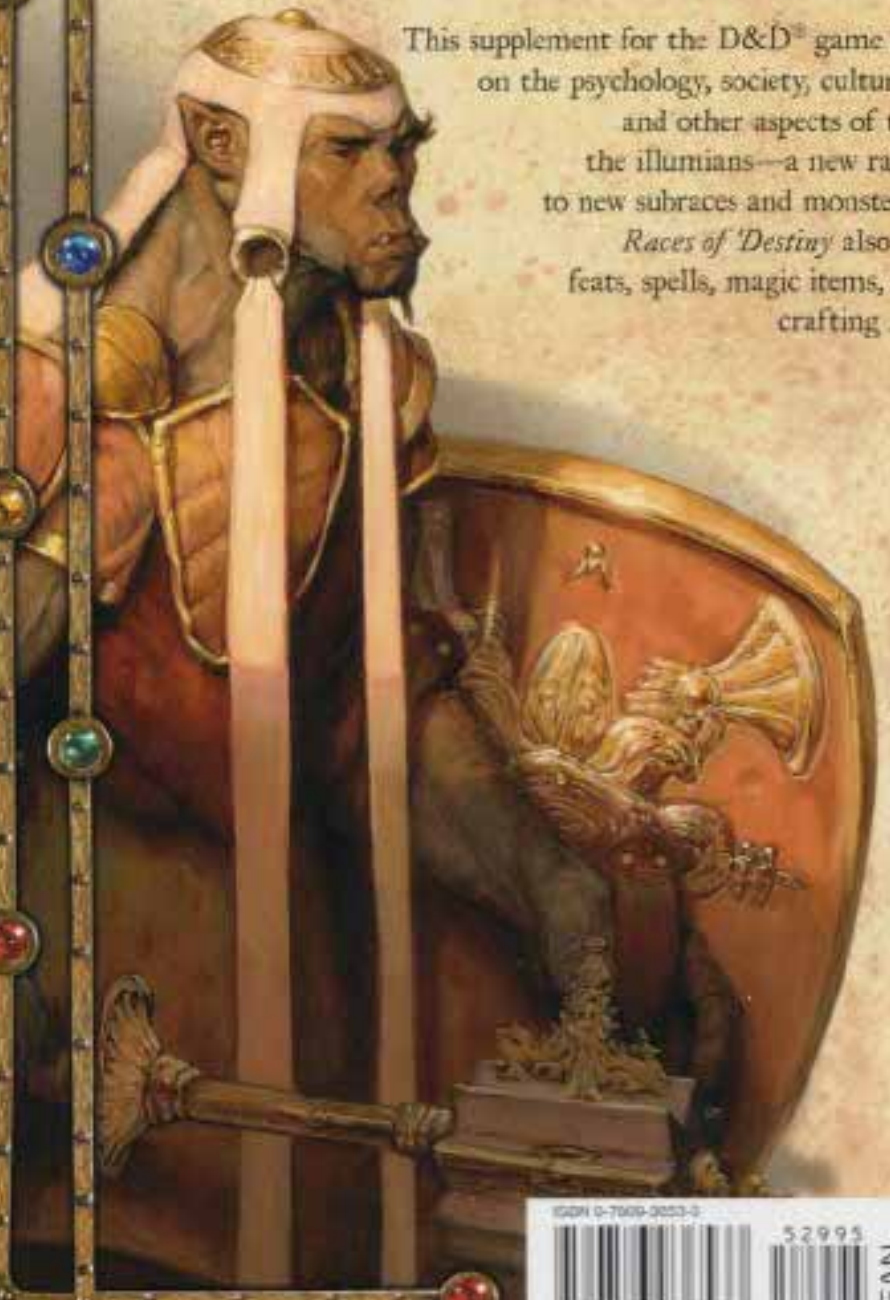
Illumian Envoy (EL 11): 1d4+2 illumian cabal guards, 1 illumian loremaster.

Mixed Mob (EL 13): 1d8+2 human bandits, 1d4 half-elf bravos, 1d6+2 half-orc thugs, 1 half-orc mob leader.

Heroes Adapted to Adventure

Hailing from towns and villages in every corner of the world, resourceful and resilient adventurers emerge from among the races of destiny: humans, half-elves, half-orcs, and illumians. With an unparalleled drive to explore and experience, these diverse individuals have created names to last throughout the ages.

This supplement for the D&D® game provides detailed information on the psychology, society, culture, behavior, religion, folklore, and other aspects of the races of destiny, including the illumians—a new race presented here. In addition to new subraces and monster races playable as characters, *Races of Destiny* also provides new prestige classes, feats, spells, magic items, equipment, and guidelines for crafting memorable adventures within human settlements.



To use this supplement, a Dungeon Master also needs the *Player's Handbook*™, *Dungeon Master's Guide*™, and *Monster Manual*™. A player needs only the *Player's Handbook*.

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THE FINALVEIL CABAL

A *Races of Destiny* Web Enhancement

A Short D&D Adventure for Four 7th-Level Characters

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The newly released *Races of Destiny* offers players and DMs many new options for their games. One of the most exciting of these is the new race known as the illumians. Devoted to knowledge and intrigue, the illumians organize themselves into cabals with secret motives and hidden agendas. This short scenario pits the adventurers against a group of illumians who have devoted themselves to the dark arts of necromancy.

The Finalveil Cabal is a short D&D adventure for four 7th-level player characters (PCs). It takes place in and around a small crypt complex protected by an illumian cabal known as the Finalveil. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.

PREPARATION

You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks—the *Player's Handbook,* the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* and the *Monster Manual*—as well as *Races of Destiny*—to use this adventure. The information presented here utilizes the D&D v.3.5 rules.

To get started, print out the adventure, including the map. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major NPCs (particularly their motivations). Then review the information on the illumians in *Races of Destiny*. Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, the proper page in the *Monster Manual* is referenced.

BACKGROUND

Illumian cabals are hidden organizations that pursue their individual agendas in secret. These cabals are grouped into broad categories according to their goals and methods. Those that use undeath as a means of preserving knowledge are known as gravewhisper cabals.

One gravewhisper cabal, known as the Finalveil Cabal, has long held a tome of great power called the *Veiled Codex* in one of its crypts. The members of this group have been using the lore from this ancient volume to turn the eldest and most powerful members of the cabal into undead creatures, thus ensuring that death cannot rob the organization of talents and wisdom. The illumians of the Finalveil Cabal regard their use of necromantic magic and their association with undead creatures as pragmatic rather than evil—

nothing more than a tool for the preservation of important knowledge. They devote themselves to gathering the necessary materials for these transformations and to ensuring that the organization's existence remains a secret.

Despite their efforts to keep their activities hidden, however, the members of the Finalveil have attracted a number of powerful enemies over the centuries. Several good-aligned churches, having learned about the growing number of undead creatures the cabal is creating, have mounted efforts to destroy them. Furthermore, at least two other cabals of illumians oppose the use of necromancy as a tool, despite the convenience it provides in the preservation of important illumian scholars. Other groups too, whether knowingly or not, have worked to destroy the undead creatures within the Finalveil. Unbeknownst to the members of the cabal, these enemies have gathered important information about the group and the source of its knowledge.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters must penetrate the catacombs of the Finalveil Cabal and retrieve the powerful tome known as the *Veiled Codex*. Along the way, they must overcome both the living and the undead servants of the cabal. Whatever their reasons for acquiring the *Veiled Codex*, the characters earn themselves a powerful and subtle enemy when they interfere with the cabal's activities, and the adventure opens up the possibility of a long-term campaign against the secretive illumians.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

As DM, you know best how to involve your PCs in an adventure. You can use the following hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to fit your campaign or the characters.

- The Finalveil Cabal has many enemies, none of whom are more vehement or violent than the other illumian cabals. Most of these latter groups have more noble purposes and more humane methods than the sinister Finalveil, but a few are just as ruthless. Because the player characters have already achieved a small amount of fame for their exploits, one of these illumian cabals seeks them out and openly asks for their help in dealing with the Finalveil. This adventure hook is an excellent way to introduce the secretive illumians into your campaign. For a more intrigue-filled variant, you can have another cabal with darker motives contact the PCs. This tactic makes the characters unwitting pawns in a struggle between two evil organizations.

- Not all of the Finalveil's enemies are illumians. Despite their efforts at secrecy, the members of the Finalveil have also attracted the enmity of several good-aligned churches, any one of which might commission the PCs to recover and/or destroy the *Veiled Codex*. Clerics proposing such a mission might serve a nature god such as Obad-Hai who abhors the unnatural presence of the undead that the cabal creates, or a fierce god of honorable confrontation such as St. Cuthbert. They might even be servants of Boccob (or some other god of learning) who simply want to add the lore of the *Veiled Codex* to their own stores of knowledge.

- The *Veiled Codex* is an ancient tome. Of those few scholars who have actually heard of it, even fewer know that it is currently in the possession of the Finalveil Cabal. Through other adventures or research, the characters might find references to the manuscript in other ancient tomes and unearth descriptions of the powerful lore that it contains. Once aware of its existence, the PCs might decide to seek it out on their own initiative. Depending on their nature and priorities, they might undertake such a mission for any number of reasons—perhaps to destroy the book, perhaps to claim its knowledge for their own use, or possibly to turn it over to a well-meaning organization or powerful individual.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The Finalveil Cabal is a site-based scenario in which the action occurs in and around the hidden catacomb complex that houses the *Veiled Codex* and its protectors. The adventure begins when the characters enter the catacombs (see Entry Points, below).

THE FINALVEIL ENCLAVE

The catacombs occupy a small underground complex beneath a pedestrian graveyard in a city of your choosing. On the surface above the catacombs is a mortuary that is open to the public and a small, nondescript building that serves as the cabal's safehouse. The surrounding community could be large or small, depending on the needs of your campaign and the ability of the characters to travel from place to place.

Although the *Veiled Codex* is often stored in these catacombs, few of the cabal's powerful undead masters ever come here. This minor enclave depends more on secrecy than the outright power of its guardians to protect the valuable tome.

INTERIOR FEATURES

The noteworthy features and conditions within the catacombs are described below.

Ceilings: The ceilings of the corridors and rooms within the catacombs are about 12 feet high. The ceiling in the grand room with the coffin-shaped dais is 20 feet high.

Floors: The floors throughout the complex are made of fairly even bedrock covered by worked stone. Moving over these floors is relatively easy compared to those found in many dungeon settings.

Light: Most of the complex is unlit and remains dark even during the day. A few areas have some illumination, which is noted in the appropriate area descriptions.

Spiral Staircase: A spiral staircase leads up from the catacombs to the safehouse, which is located in a nondescript aboveground building. Characters can walk up or down this staircase without making Climb checks, but doing so hampers movement. Each square moved on the staircase costs 10 feet of movement, and characters cannot run or charge while on the stairs. The staircase rises 40 feet from the floor of the dais chamber.

Staircase from Mortuary: The long, straight staircase leading down from the cabal's mortuary is the ideal route for the characters to use in penetrating the complex. Characters can walk up or down this staircase without making Climb checks, but doing so hampers movement. Each square moved on the staircase costs 10 feet of movement, and characters cannot run or charge while on the stairs. The staircase descends 40 feet from the mortuary to the floor of the catacombs.

ENTRY POINTS

The catacombs have two entrances, but only one—the staircase leading from the mortuary—is likely to be available to the characters during their initial foray against the cabal. This staircase may come to the characters' attention in any number of ways (see Adventure Hooks, above). Alternatively, you can allow the characters to discover information about the spiral staircase leading down from the cabal's safehouse.

After spending some time in the small catacomb complex, the characters should be aware of both staircases. Thus, they can use either entrance for any subsequent forays they make against the cabal.

Mortuary Entrance (EL 4)

A few of the cabal's enemies have already located this entrance, so it is the easier of the two for PCs to find. The cabal trusts to the careful construction of the secret door at the back of the curator's office to prevent discovery of the catacombs beneath.

Creature: The curator is within the mortuary during daylight hours.

Curator: Male illumian sorcerer 4; hp 10.

Development: Anyone searching the curator's office may make a DC 30 Search check to locate the secret door, but foreknowledge of the existence of the catacombs can provide a hefty circumstance bonus on this check. Although the exact value of this bonus is left to your discretion, +6 is appropriate for a character who has been told the location and nature of the secret door.

Cabal Complex Entrance (EL 4)

The safehouse that sits above the catacomb complex is a lightly guarded, nondescript building. The doorway to the staircase that leads to the catacombs is concealed in the same manner as the door hidden in the mortuary.

Creatures: Unlike the mortuary entrance, however, this one is watched and guarded by cabal members from within the safehouse. Thus, PCs who try to force their way into the catacombs via this entrance are confronted by opponents who, though no match for the PCs, are determined to stop them.

Cabal Guards: Male and female illumian fighter 1/sorcerer 1; hp 8.

Development: Anyone searching the entry area of the safehouse may make a DC 30 Search check to locate the secret door, but foreknowledge of the existence of the catacombs can provide a hefty circumstance bonus on this check. Although the exact value of this bonus is left to your discretion, +6 is appropriate for a character who has been told the location and nature of the secret door.

INSIDE THE CATACOMBS

The following areas are keyed to the catacomb map.

1. EMBALMING CHAMBER

This room is devoted to preparing the corpses of lesser cabal members (those lacking the power necessary for conversion to vampirism or lichdom) for burial.

The acrid smell in the air of this small chamber is reminiscent of the alchemical ingredients used to preserve bodies for burial, and the room's furnishings bear out this impression. Empty jars line the walls, and three large workbenches fill much of the room's interior. Despite signs of regular use, the room is eerily still.

This room contains nothing of import to the characters, although lesser members of the cabal use it frequently.

2. EXCAVATION CHAMBER (EL 6)

Although this enclave is currently only a minor outpost of the Finalveil Cabal, the sinister organization plans an expansion of these facilities in the coming years. To that end, two undead creatures have been set to excavating more chambers to house the cabal's preserved dead. Because their plans for expansion won't come to fruition for some time, the cabal members have left the zombies here unsupervised, knowing that even slow labor will produce the necessary results given enough time.

This rough, square chamber is obviously the site of an ongoing excavation. Its walls, unlike those in the rest of the catacombs, are made of rough-hewn stone that appears to have been exposed quite recently. The rubble from this excavation has been pushed to the side of the room.

Two hulking gray corpses move about the chamber under their own power, hewing yet more stone from the walls with their powerful blows. Though the creatures stand nearly 8 feet tall, their bodies slump and sag, as though their frames can no longer hold the decaying flesh that drapes their bones.

Each of the squares on the outside of the room is filled with dense rubble that impedes movement. Entering such a square costs 2 squares of movement, and within it, the DC for a Balance or Tumble check increases by +5 and the DC for a Move Silently check increases by +2. For more information on dense rubble, see page 90 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Creatures: Two mindless minotaur zombies occupy this chamber, working tirelessly to excavate a new catacomb section. They attack any intruders that they detect.

Minotaur Zombies (2): hp 83 and 81; *see Monster Manual*, page 267.

3. SYMBOL CHAMBERS

These two long chambers house the bodies of long-dead, lesser members of the Finalveil Cabal. Most of the members who die before attaining the level of power that would merit induction into unlife are laid to rest in chambers such as this one. The cabal's traditional respect for departed members, however, demands that it protect their earthly remains with magic traps and undead guardians created for this purpose.

3a. Wraith Chamber (EL 8)

Shadowy illumination (see page 164 in the *Player's Handbook*) reaches this room from the dais chamber (area 4).

The artistry of the three coffins that occupy this chamber is a testament to the importance that their makers placed on the treatment of the dead. Faint illumination enters the room from the far end, causing the coffins to cast long shadows across the floor. From somewhere within these shadows, three sinister, spectral figures robed in darkness glide forward. They have no visible features or appendages save the glowing red pinpoints where their eyes should be.

The cabal has set both undead guardians and deadly traps to defend the bodies of its deceased members.

Creatures: Three wraiths loyal to the Finalveil Cabal guard this chamber at all times. Once minor members of the cabal, they were transformed into undead creatures as a reward for their exemplary service.

Wraiths: hp 35, 32, 32; *see Monster Manual*, page 258.

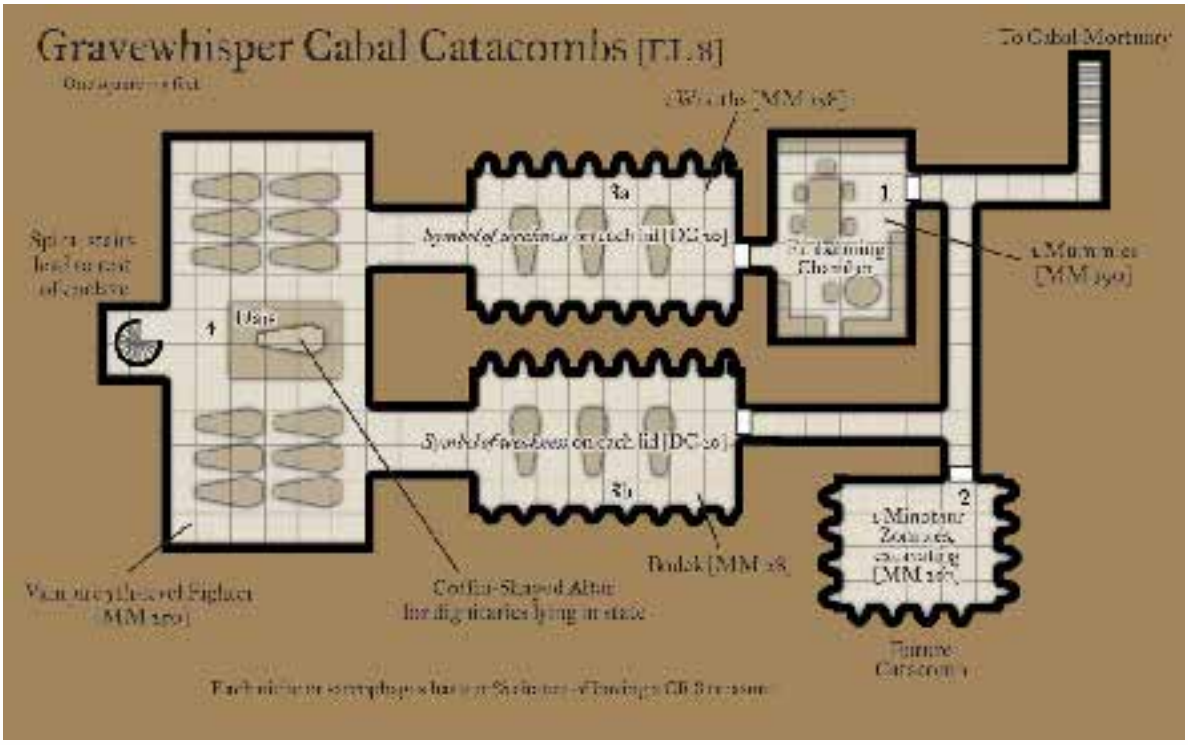
Traps: Each of the chamber's coffins is trapped with *symbol* spells that drain the strength of those who trigger them.

***Symbol of Weakness* Trap:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger; no reset; spell effect (*symbol of weakness*, 13th level cleric, 3d6 Strength damage, DC 20 Fortitude negates); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Market Price: 45,500 gp, 3,640 xp.

3b. Bodak Chamber (EL 8)

Shadowy illumination (see page 164 in the *Player's Handbook*) reaches this room from the dais chamber (area 4).

This chamber resembles area 3a in most ways, except that the undead guardian stationed here is a solitary bodak rather than a group of wraiths.



Faint illumination filters into this area from an entrance at its western end, revealing three large coffins. The room's only occupant is a gray-fleshed, hairless humanoid with an elongated, skull-like head and horrid, empty eyes.

The coffins house the remains of lesser cabal members who did not merit induction into unlife.

Creature: A bodak loyal to the Finalveil Cabal guards this area. Once a human scholar allied with the cult, the bodak was corrupted by the knowledge within the *Veiled Codex* and transformed into an undead monster.

Bodak: hp 58; *see Monster Manual*, page 28.

Traps: Each of the chamber's coffins is trapped with *symbol* spells that drain the strength of those who trigger them.

***Symbol of Weakness* Trap:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger; no reset; spell effect (*symbol of weakness*, 13th level cleric, 3d6 Strength damage, DC 20 Fortitude negates); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Market Price: 45,500 gp, 3,640 xp.

4. DAIS CHAMBER

This grand chamber is the heart of the enclave. The ceiling here is higher than in other sections of the catacombs, and it reaches a height of 20 feet at the center. Three *continual flame* torches attached to the walls provide normal illumination within the chamber and shed dim light along the passages and into areas 3a and 3b.

The chamber contains numerous coffins, plus a coffin-shaped dais that holds pride of place at the very center.

Light from three torches illuminates this large chamber, revealing dozens of coffins, one of which serves as a dais in the center of the room. A sinister-looking warrior with pale skin and red, haunting eyes advances, whirling a deadly spiked chain. Glowing magical symbols encircle the creature's head, bathing its whole form in pale blue light.

The dais serves as the coffin for the guardian of the *Veiled Codex*.

Creature: An illumian vampire of moderate power lairs here and guards the *Veiled Codex*. This creature, whose name is Finalveil Iarmid, is a newly formed undead by the cabal's standards, but he is loyal and dangerous nonetheless.

Finalveil Iarmid: Male illumian vampire fighter 5/rogue 1; CR 8; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 6d12; hp 39; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5; Grp +11; Atk or Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+9 plus energy drain, slam) or +13 melee (2d4+12, +1 *spiked chain*) or +9 ranged

(1d6/×3, masterwork shortbow); SA blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate, energy drain, final utterance, sneak attack +1d6; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, gaseous form, glyphic resonance, Illumian word, power sigils, resistances (cold 10, electricity 10), shadow heritage, spider climb, superior literacy, trapfinding, turn resistance +4, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +4 (+6 against shadow spells); Str 22, Dex 17, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +12, Ride +1, Search +9, Sense Motive +11, Spot +17; Alertness[B], Blind-Fight[B], Combat Reflexes[B], Dodge[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain)[B], Improved Initiative[B], Lightning Reflexes[B], Mobility[B], Power Attack, Weapon Focus (spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (spiked chain).

Blood Drain (Ex): Iarmid can suck blood from a living victim with his fangs by making a successful grapple check. If he pins the foe, he drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, Iarmid gains 5 temporary hit points.

Children of the Night (Su): Once per day, Iarmid can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve him for up to 1 hour.

Dominate (Su): Iarmid can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This effect is similar to a gaze attack, except that Iarmid must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not affected. Anyone he targets must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or fall instantly under Iarmid's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by Iarmid's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn (see *Monster Manual*, page 253) 1d4 days after burial. If Iarmid instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under Iarmid's command and remains enslaved until his destruction. At any given time, Iarmid may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than 12 Hit Dice; any spawn he creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so Iarmid can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. He may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

Energy Drain (Su): Any living creature hit by Iarmid's slam attack gains two negative levels (DC 14 Fortitude save to remove). For each negative level bestowed, he gains 5 temporary hit points. Iarmid can use his energy drain ability once per round.

Final Utterance (Ex): When Iarmid dies, everyone within earshot of him hears ululating Illumian syllables for 6 rounds. The words may be gibberish, or they may pronounce a prophetic phrase or a final curse on his enemies.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Iarmid deals 1d6 extra points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Iarmid may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Alternate Form (Su): Iarmid can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell (caster level 12th), except that Iarmid does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in his alternate form, Iarmid loses his natural slam attack and dominate ability, but he gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of his new form. He can remain in that form until he assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Fast Healing (Ex): Iarmid heals 5 points of damage each round so long as he has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, he automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. He must reach his coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (He can travel up to 9 miles in 2 hours.) Any additional damage dealt to Iarmid while he is in gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in his coffin, Iarmid is helpless. He regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, Iarmid can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but he can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Glyphic Resonance (Ex): Iarmid is immune to symbol-based magic of caster level 6th or below.

He takes a –4 racial penalty on his saving throws against symbol-based magic of caster level 7th or higher.

Illumian Word (Su): Iarmid's power sigils combine to form the word aeshuur. When he deals damage to a target with a sneak attack or critical hit, he gains a +2 dodge bonus to his AC against that target until the beginning of his next turn. Iarmid may use this ability twice per day.

Power Sigils (Su): Iarmid has the power sigils aesh (vigor) and uur (grace). Aesh grants him a +2 bonus on Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks, and uur grants him the same bonus on Dexterity checks and Dexterity-based skill checks.

Shadow Heritage (Ex): Iarmid has a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells with the shadow descriptor.

Spider Climb (Ex): Iarmid can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Superior Literacy (Ex): Speak Language is a class skill for both of Iarmid's classes.

Trapfinding (Ex): Iarmid can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Iarmid is treated as a 10-HD undead for the purpose of resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt.

Undead Traits: Iarmid is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. He is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to his physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. He cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing. He has darkvision out to 60 feet.

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, *+1 spiked chain*, masterwork shortbow with 10 arrows, *potion of inflict minor wounds*.

Tactics: Iarmid attacks a flat-footed creature if possible so as to take advantage of his sneak attack ability. If he manages to deal sneak attack damage, he triggers the power of the mystical symbols that surround him. Unlike most vampires, Iarmid does not try to flee if the battle goes against him. Not only does he know that the leaders of the Finalveil would enact swift and final vengeance against him should he allow the book to be taken, but he has little to gain by retreating, since his coffin lies within this chamber.

Treasure: Within Iarmid's coffin lies the *Veiled Codex*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Upon retrieving the *Veiled Codex*, the characters have successfully completed the adventure. Although the catacombs contain relatively little treasure, the PCs can sell the *Veiled Codex* if they choose.

The safehouse above the catacombs houses two low-level illumian guards who pose no threat to characters as powerful as the PCs (See Cabal Complex Entrance, above). If captured, however, these two might divulge information that could lead to further conflicts with the Finalveil Cabal. In particular, the PCs might be able to learn the location of another cabal outpost from the guards. By making repeated attacks on the cabal's enclaves, the party could become a persistent thorn in the side of the Finalveil.

The *Veiled Codex* contains detailed instructions for conducting the magic rituals necessary to become a lich. As treasure, it can be sold for at least 15,000 gp. On the other hand, if someone sent the PCs to retrieve the book, they could expect a reward equal to its market value when they turn it over to their employer or offer proof of its destruction, depending upon the terms of their agreement.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

As noted at the beginning of the adventure, characters who successfully complete their mission earn the enduring enmity of the Finalveil Cabal. However, because months of game time could pass before the cabal is ready to strike back, the characters could easily fail to understand that they've made a powerful foe by recovering the *Veiled Codex*.

This adventure can also serve as a gateway to interactions with other illumian cabals. Once the PCs are aware of the illumians and their cabals, they might be forced to turn to them again when seeking other lore.

The *Veiled Codex* can lead to additional adventures as well. Certain cryptic passages within the tome hint at other manuscripts that can unlock the powers of undeath. These tomes, even more ancient and terrible

than the *Veiled Codex*, have long been sought by the leaders of the Finalveil Cabal. But because they now hunt and hate the characters, the cabal members are likely to investigate any location that the characters visit. And if one of those sites holds a clue to the location of a book they seek, they will certainly find and pursue it. Thus, the PCs could easily find themselves embroiled in a race with the cabal for possession of an evil tome. Should it fall into the cabal's hands, its members would surely use it to make life miserable for their enemies—including the PCs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jesse Decker spends his days (and nights and weekends) as the development manager for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS miniatures and roleplaying products. Prior to that, he spent two years as the editor-in-chief of *Dragon Magazine*, and lots of time working with nefarious groups such as the Wizards of the Coast web team. Jesse has participated in numerous design projects, including *Unearthed Arcana* and the upcoming *Races of Eberron*. If he's not shooting his mouth off about some aspect of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, Jesse is likely asleep.